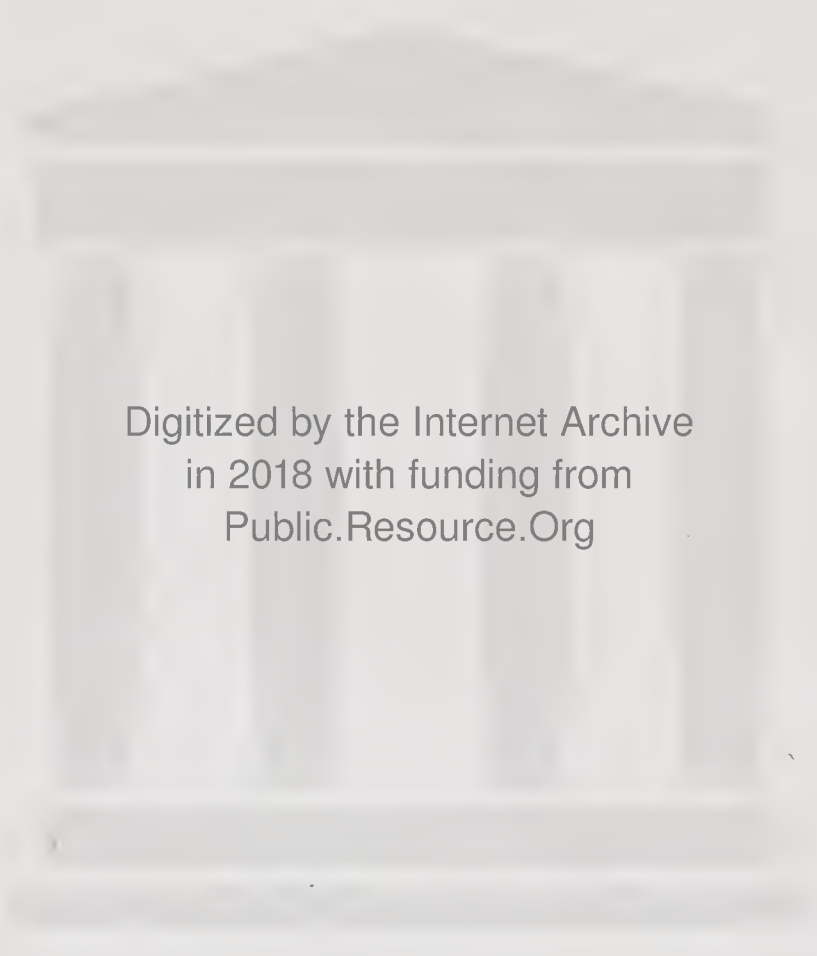


**LAST
GLIMPSES
OF
BAPU**

MANUBEN GANDHI



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MANUBEN GANDHI

Dr S. RADHAKRISHNAN

JAIPUR

English Edition, Copyright, 1962

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FOREWORD

Though we have had many books on Gandhiji, the present one by Shrimati Manuben is a valuable addition to Gandhi literature. She gives us an intimate record of the last thirty days of Gandhiji's life on earth which were devoted to the restoration of peace and unity in the country.

Gandhiji was essentially a man of religion, of silence, prayer and penance. His humility and humanity were remarkable. The free, fresh and unsophisticated way in which he lived with his closest associates, young and old, is brought out in this book. Shrimati Manuben was his dear and close associate and so her impressions are undoubtedly of much use to any student of Gandhiji's life and work.

While a part of this book relates to Gandhiji's letters and speeches, the other part is a record of the impressions which Shrimati Manuben had about his views and conversations with others and does not have the same authority as his own recorded letters and speeches. Naturally being young and impressionable, Shrimati Manuben was greatly impressed, as we all are, by Gandhiji's qualities of holiness and heroism, purity of heart and gentleness of manner and tranquility in sorrow, defeat and despair. We have to acquire these qualities as the problems which faced Gandhiji are still with us.

New Delhi
Sept. 12, 1961

A. R. Radhakrishnan



Preface

The latter half of venerable Bapu's life, particularly the last phase of it, was most glorious and significant as well as unique. It was my good fortune to be intimately close to him during his last days, but little did I realize that I would be a witness to his *nirvana*.

I used to keep, in my halty Gujarati, a daily record of the last month of Bapu's life. These last days of Bapu will ever remain memorable in the annals of India. In these pages the reader will find a vivid picture of the then state of India and of the agony and unrest of Bapu's mind.

I am no scholar, nor do I wield a facile pen ; yet what I have written so far has won popular appreciation. In fact, whatever is pleasant or creditable in my writings comes from Bapu. I have tried to reflect Bapu's mind in my words.

It sounds unnatural to me to acknowledge my gratitude to the late respected Kishorlal Kaka. I can repay my debt to him, if at all, only by adoring him in my heart of hearts. My obligation to Shri Manubhai Jodhani (editor of *Stri Jivan*) and Shri Jayantilalbhai (editor of *Bhavanagar Samachar*) cannot be adequately expressed in words. Because of their great affection and personal regard for me they published (in original Gujarati) the present series of articles containing my reminiscences of Bapu. The initiative for their publication, however, came from Kishorlal Kaka.

Bapu used to say that his life itself was his message. Hence I have taken all care to eschew personal names called for by the context in this narrative. Yet it is possible that in this lengthy narrative something may have crept in to give offence or do injustice to someone ; if so, I ask him or her repeatedly to forgive me.

In this book I have mainly given a day-to-day account of Bapu's life up to the great event of his departure from this world.

Detailed account of his funeral rites and connected matters have already been published elsewhere. Hence I have not dwelt upon them at length but have completed these glimpses by confining myself to what I saw with my own eyes.

Akhil Bharatiya Sarva Seva Sangh has brought out a Hindi Translation of this diary, so that all lovers of the national language may profit by it. Now this English translation is being published by Messrs. Shiva Lal Agarwala & Co. (P) Ltd., Agra, for English-knowing people in India and other countries.

I am very grateful to most revered Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Vice-President of India for very kindly writing a Foreword to this book.

25th Sept., 1961

Authoress

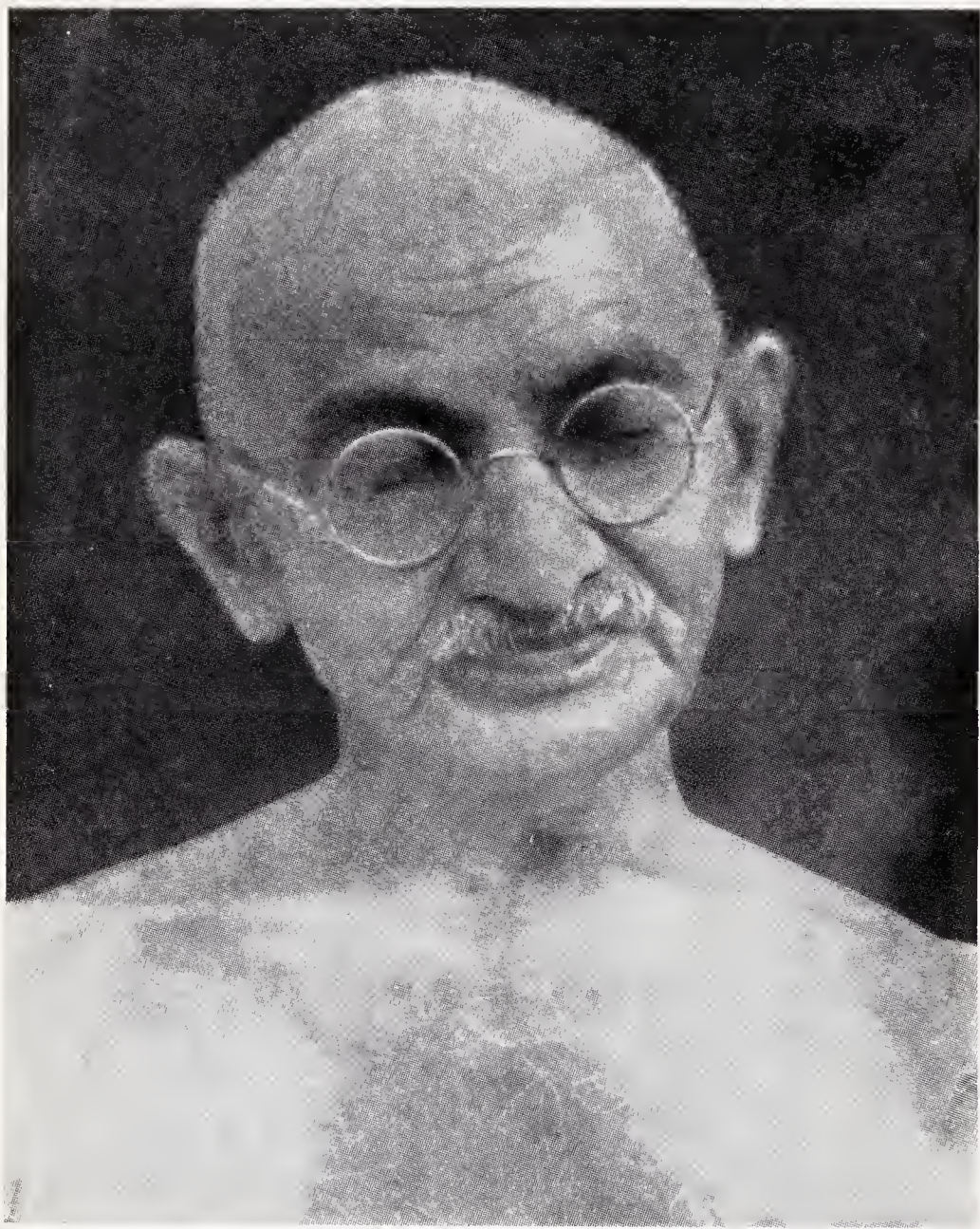
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The Social Worker and Purity of Heart 1

Birla Bhawan, New Delhi
31-12-'47

Why get fever ?

Today I am writing this after completing my diary for two days. I am feeling better today. The first question Bapu put to me after rising from his prayer was : "Well, what is your temperature now ?"

He continued, "This morning it was 100 degrees. Today it has come down to this level in two days. Yesterday you went off to sleep as early as 6 p.m. ; when did you rise ? It shows you have grown very weak. You should find out why you are laid up with fever so often, once in a month or two. I cannot tolerate this at all. I have still to get a lot of work out of you. God has given you the spirit of service, a tender heart, intellect, affection and everything else. But if you do not keep good health, all that will not avail. Know well that God cannot but be displeased at this neglect of His blessings. You have been down with fever for two days ; it has caused me to suspend much of my work ! Moreover, it causes me anxiety as well. Therefore, try to be cheerful, take plenty of rest and do not exert yourself. You must take nourishing diet in small quantities all through the day. Take plenty of fruit. You cannot eat your fill at one sitting, and, therefore, you do not get proper nourishment.

“Mind you, I am not chiding you. Chiding you will do me no good ; while it does not benefit you at all. I am only giving vent to my feelings of sorrow and pain. When I have some leisure, I recall that this poor girl has wasted her health in serving Ba¹ and myself, and I cannot do even so much as to give her the youthful appearance of a girl of sixteen. If I am unfit to do even this, how can I solve the Herculean problem of Hindu-Muslim unity? You cannot imagine how uneasy I felt when your temperature shot up to 103 degrees. How much you are pulled down in the course of these two days! How grieved I am to see this! If I cannot get your full co-operation, how can I get the support of all people in building up a great unified nation, which is so close to my heart. (Patting me with affection), ah! you are crying; I cannot put up with it! I am afflicted with grief! Therefore, resolve now that you will keep good health. Do not aspire to go through too much work! After all, this aspiration is a sin, isn’t it?”

Recollections of Mahadevabhai²

Early in the morning Bapu addressed the afore-said words to me in his usual affectionate manner, but in a grave tone. I was uneasy all day to think of it. Then at night Bapu sent for my diary to go through it. He read it after a long time. He liked the diary and even put his signature on it. Finding a full verbatim report in it, he spoke out, “Oh! Had Mahadeva been alive today, he would have danced for joy to see these verbatim notes.

¹ Kasturba, wife of Gandhiji.

² Bhai : means brother.

Mahadeva possessed this wonderful power : he would have drawn out the best in you and made you his co-worker, thereby reducing his own pressure of work. Now I miss him at every step have fallen out here. If Mahadeva had been here, he would have pacified them immediately. He had the wonderful knack of reconciling people.”

Today I felt much better all the time. Bapu is following his usual routine of massage, bath, study of Bengalee, spinning, meals, etc. There was a stream of visitors today, so he did not dictate anything in particular. He dictated only a note on Tatya Sahab¹. Thakkar Bapa called on him. He has grown weaker. It is so cold here that hands and feet are benumbed. Because of fever I am feeling cold internally as well.

Swarajya² is meaningless without
purity of hearts

In a letter to . . . Bapu dictated : “It seemed difficult to fight the English, but as I look back I find it was easy enough. On the other hand, the present struggle spells danger. Making mountains of mole-hills, we could make representations to the English in any light we pleased. But today we are striking at the very root of our nation. We have a clear vision of our duty, yet we shirk it. Without purity of hearts swarajya has no reality. We had no purity and that is why we have come by such a state of affairs. To my mind it is no swarajya. True swarajya means that people should live peace-

¹ A suffix showing respect.

² Self-government or independence.

fully under their own form of government and at the same time uplift their neighbours.

The moral duty of a social worker

In the afternoon Subhadra¹ Ben¹ Gupta and other sisters came on a visit. While talking to them, Bapu said, "You go out to refugee camps to render social service, but you are unable to exercise any influence over the people there. The reason is that you put on these silken clothes in up-to-date styles and advise them to wear simple hand-spun clothes and to keep clean. . . . Ah ! those unfortunate people are sunk in poverty and it is futile to advise them. I wish that you four sisters should take the lead in this matter by setting an example before them through your deeds, rather than words. Your work will be fruitful to the extent to which your public and private life is simple and virtuous. You start from your houses and bungalows, well-fed and smartly dressed, showing yourselves off with a swaying gait, and alight from your cars, purse in hand. But the people you meet scarcely have any clothes except those they have on their bodies and consequently they cannot even take a bath. They had to leave behind them their belongings and property worth thousands of rupees. Have you ever thought of this when you go among those people ? You want to earn a name in society ; this is your real motive. Today many women are offering themselves for social service. Of course, there are exceptions among them. Many a woman has really sacrificed her health and wealth in the service of others. But such women can be counted on the tips of one's

¹ Ben : means sister.

fingers. I need women who can impress other women they meet, with the importance of social uplift by their example, not by their words.”

Be large-hearted like the sea

Some volunteers came in the afternoon. In his message to them, Bapu said : “Have you faith in the *charkha*¹ ? (By *charkha* I mean social reconstruction.) Without the *charkha* the battle for freedom could not have been fought. I doubt if self-government would have come about at all. You must also consider how you spend public money. A volunteer should not bear ill-will towards anyone. We must overlook all distinctions of caste and creed. Such distinctions may have some justification individually, but collectively we are all sons of the same motherland and are consequently brethren. We ought to be large-hearted like a river. People throw a lot of filth and rubbish into a river, yet we become clean by washing in it. Have you ever considered how much we need it despite its brackish waters ? If we become equally generous, we shall be known all over the world as the citizens of a glorious country on account of our humanitarianism.

Desire to go about the villages of India

In the evening Pattani Saheb came. He desired that Bapu should go to Bhavanagar when responsible government would be inaugurated there. Bapu said, “It is impossible to leave this place. However there is a likelihood. ‘Do or die’—if one of these resolves is carried out, I will certainly go to Bhava-

¹ The spinning-wheel.

nagar. I have not been to Kathiawar¹ for many years. I wish that, when this task has been accomplished satisfactorily, I should go from village to village. By touring in this way I wish to acquaint myself with the joys and sorrows of the people. Who knows what may come tomorrow? The condition of Sind is so deplorable that if I ever leave Delhi I will go there first. I will not need a passport to go to Sind. If one wants to go to see one's brother, does one need any permission?"

Pattani Saheb also met me and invited me to Bhavanagar. But how can I go? In the evening somehow or other I walked slowly to the prayer grounds. I feel weaker when I walk. Then there is severe cold.

The question of the repatriation of the refugees

During his talk at the prayer-meeting, Bapu spoke thus about the Hindus of Sind: "Some Muslim friends have come from Pakistan. They say that the Hindus can go back to Pakistan if they wish. I think that the time is not yet ripe for them to go to Sind. Otherwise, why do the Hindus who are still staying there want to come here out of fear? Either the Hindus of Sind should be fully protected or proper arrangements should be made for their safe transfer to the Indian Union. So long as one of the two courses is not adopted, the Government of India, it is certain, can have no peace. So long as people do not go back to the places whence they

¹ The peninsular region in the west of India, which contains the town of Bhavanagar and also Gandhiji's native town, Porbandar.

came, I cannot live in peace, whatever others might feel or say. Possibly a number of refugees have already settled here, but what of that? How can they help thinking of their homes and hearths? But I am suggesting to the refugees that they should earn their bread honestly by the sweat of their brow. This will enable them to forget their distress to some extent and keep them away from evil ways."

Bapu's whole life is one long prayer

Bapu's talks are broadcast over the radio. In that connection . . . has addressed a letter to Bapu. Replying to it at the prayer-meeting, Bapu said : "All that I say every day is a part of my prayer. Whatever I possess is dedicated to God. The writer has suggested that records be made of hymns and prayers. Hymns and prayers may be recorded, if needed. But behind the hymns is the devotion of these girls. Over the radio many kinds of musical compositions are recited. But there is a difference between them and the hymns of these girls. They sing in tune with the Infinite, and as such they exercise a holy influence. I have received telegrams about Junagadh and Ajmer. It was at Junagadh in Kathiawar that I grew up and studied. I confess to many deplorable incidents at Ajmer. There people have indulged in arson and loot without restraint. Nevertheless exaggerated reports have been published there. This is bad and should not have happened. India and Pakistan should get over their own shortcomings. It is no good finding fault with each other.

The remembrance of Jesus

Raj Kumariben came at night. This is the last day of the year. Other English people came with her to receive Bapu's blessings. In the course of his talk to them Bapu said : "No man is perfect in this world. Religious systems come into existence according to the needs of the times. We, men of this world, belittled Jesus and crucified him. We adore the same Jesus today. We drove nails into his living body and worshipped him after his death: we have repeated this history through the centuries. Today we have reached a stage which can be well put in the words of Confucius of China : 'To know what is right and not to do it is cowardice'." Bapu added : "It is only a free religion that can be perfect. We have not yet conceived free religion ; but we have not seen God either. Therefore, I have to acquire that inner vision for which I have been striving for the last sixty years. I do not claim that I have been fully successful in it, but at the same time it is true that I am drawing nearer to it and all my activities are being directed to that end."

Care of health

After their departure Bapu read the papers, washed his feet, took exercise and made ready to go to bed. I massaged his head and pressed his feet. I have not yet completely got rid of fever. My temperature was taken before I went to bed. Bapu had his feet pressed hardly for five minutes in order not to disappoint me and then he asked me to go to bed immediately. Just as he was going off to sleep, he said again, "I read in your diary what I said to you this morning, but you must think over

it seriously. At present I take good care of you. If I had not taken so much care of your health, you would have perished long ago or easily fallen a prey to some serious disease. When you lose weight or feel weak you must at once be on your guard." Today Jivarajji also remarked about me, "If this girl does not take care of her health, she will repent of it. Being too young and budding, she does not understand this."

I went off to sleep immediately, with the resolve to recover my health. . . . must study the *Gita*.¹ But he does not agree to it. Bapu says, "In that case he must give up his desire to stay with me. He must go to Rajkot or live with . . . How can he both stay here and have his own way in everything? Who compels him to stay here? There was a talk about him with Bhai Saheb also. Bhai Saheb read out the speech delivered by Maulana Saheb at Lucknow. Today the crowd of visitors was so great that it was rather tiring.

At ten o'clock everyone got ready to go to bed. Bapu did not get up early to dictate replies to letters which had piled up. Perhaps for this reason he had had all the writing materials placed by his bed.

¹ A book containing Lord Krishna's sermon to Arjuna, delivered before the great war, *Mahabharat*, began.

Birla Bhawan, New Delhi
1-1-'48

Prayer was said at 3.30 as usual. After the prayer Bapu wrote letters. . . . "To my mind the situation here is not improving even slightly. I am staying on here. I cannot say if anything can be done. The city is quiet for fear of the police. But there is fire of anger in the hearts of the people. I must either perish in that fire or put it out. I do not yet see a third course."

Today being the New Year Day of the English calendar, Bapu received many greeting cards for the New Year and Christmas. Felicitations came from Lord and Lady Mountbatten too. Raj Kumariben came very early, at dawn, to offer her good wishes.

To console her, Bapu wrote to . . . : "Your brother has expired. I never knew of his illness. But the Lord has relieved him of his illness ; this must be regarded as His mercy. One day you, I and everyone else must depart. Likewise, every day people must be dying by hundreds in this country. Some will have left behind helpless children, while many lovely children dearly loved by their parents will have been nipped in the bud. You should think of the present state of the country and thereby lighten your grief. Our own sorrows arise from selfishness."

When Bapu started for his usual walk, many



With Dr. S. Radhakrishnan.

Englishmen came to wish him a happy New Year. One of them praised Bapu in these words : "You are in reality the Lord Jesus." Bapu replied, "I cannot be Jesus, but I certainly try to walk in his footsteps."

Chandben is still indisposed. Therefore, Bapu asked me to call Colonel Dr. Bhargava over the phone.

On his way back Bapu closed his eyes. He feels very tired.

Owing to extreme cold, massage was delayed today. In the meantime Bapu collected material for the *Harijan*.¹

Weakness in the guise of non-violence

In an article Bapu wrote : "What I took to be non-violence was not the real stuff, but it was sheer weakness in the name of non-violence. I mean to say that non-violence is never ineffective. However, those who practise it may meet with failure. But I do not stop there. 'When one wakes up, it is day-dawn'. According to this maxim I think it proper to set right my past mistakes and proceed further. Only in this way man can progress."

I had to go to hospital in the forenoon. On return from there I got a sudden attack of fever. I experienced a lot of shivering and my temperature soared to 104 degrees. This did not worry me so much as the fact that it caused anxiety to Bapu to see me in this condition.

Our countrymen seized with mutual fear

Pattani Saheb came on a visit. He did so

¹ A weekly edited by Gandhiji.

because Bapu had asked him to come every day. He went back for lunch at 1.30. There was a talk with Thenet Roman of Siam about the outburst of inhuman violence in this country. He congratulated Bapu, saying, "It is through your efforts that India has become free. It had its repercussions on all countries. It is but natural that all countries are awakened to a sense of freedom." Bapu said : "But I cannot take the credit for this. I do not regard it as true freedom. If I had known beforehand that our non-violence was just passive resistance, perhaps these consequences would have been arrested. Today even in this capital city people cannot move about fearlessly. Our brothers have a fear of their own countrymen. How can I say then that our country enjoys freedom? Whose fault is it? I do not drag yourself into it. It is certain, however, that all this is the result of foreign rule. I cannot refrain myself from saying this."

After his departure, Gyani Kartar Singhji and Sardar Dilip Singhji came. They gave reports about the Panjab and Kashmir. At the present moment the fire of communal animosity is only smouldering as if it were covered with ashes. None can tell when and where this volcano will erupt.

At the prayer-meeting, first of all Bapu offered New Year greetings to Christian brothers. Today's prayer-meeting was largely attended as compared with other days. The women could hardly find sufficient accommodation.

Bapu said, "This is the first day of the Christian year. Hence I offer New Year greetings to you all.

“If seven or eight minutes are wasted in finding seats for women, people think that millions have wasted many minutes. In our country there is no system by which women can easily find seats for themselves. But in other countries there is. Those countries where proper respect is shown to women are held in honour. Our *shastras*¹ contain a Sanskrit verse which means that wherever women are held in high esteem, gods dwell there. Now that we are a free nation, our responsibilities have become all the greater.

“Those who come to the prayer-meeting should not come here merely with a political bias. Prayer is nourishment for the soul. As the body gets weaker without nourishment, so do we become weaker in character day by day without prayer.

Harijans² and prohibition

“Today I have to say certain things about the Harijans. Recently a Harijan conference was held in Uttar Pradesh³. At that conference one of the ministers exhorted them not to remain dirty and to give up evil habits. At this a Harijan stood up and spoke with great courage, ‘We may go about half-naked but we will not remain unclean.’ Liquor is worse than poison. The poor folk come back home after a hard day’s strenuous labour. To relieve their fatigue and to forget the unbearable miseries caused by their poverty they take to drink. The use of intoxicating liquors has a very pernicious effect on the body and the soul. If I could, I would

¹ Religious books.

² Untouchables ; literally, God’s people.

³ A state in Northern India.

humbly request the Government to get all the liquor shops closed and to keep at those shops good but cheap foodstuffs for sale to these poor people. At the same time it should bring out literature to instruct the people. Money is wasted on such vices on the one hand ; and on seeing pornographic films on the other.

“I have seen with my own eyes that hard-worked villagers who come to the town to sell their products rarely go back without seeing the pictures. I am sure that if we persist in these ways we cannot keep our body and mind healthy. In keeping with the constitution of the Congress a campaign for prohibition was launched as early as 1920. The Congress is now in power. Therefore, it should pay serious attention to the pledges it gave to the people and see what lines of action violate the constitution. It should completely forego the foul revenue from excise. If I can make my feeble voice heard, I would say that neither the Government nor the people will suffer any loss thereby. It would be to their common advantage. Even if the government is put to some loss in making people virtuous, I believe that in this era of freedom a democratic government should bear that loss.”

After the prayer Bapu went out for a walk. I could not accompany him because of my indisposition. I cannot say who kept him company.

On his return Bapu wrote out a draft of his speech. Endless undercurrents of serious differences exist with The effect of it can be seen all round. It is bound to have its ramifications on the public mind. If this persists, Bapu feels that a single

crack will cause the whole edifice to crumble. Bapu holds the key to its solution. In the event of his failure, this problem will take a different course.

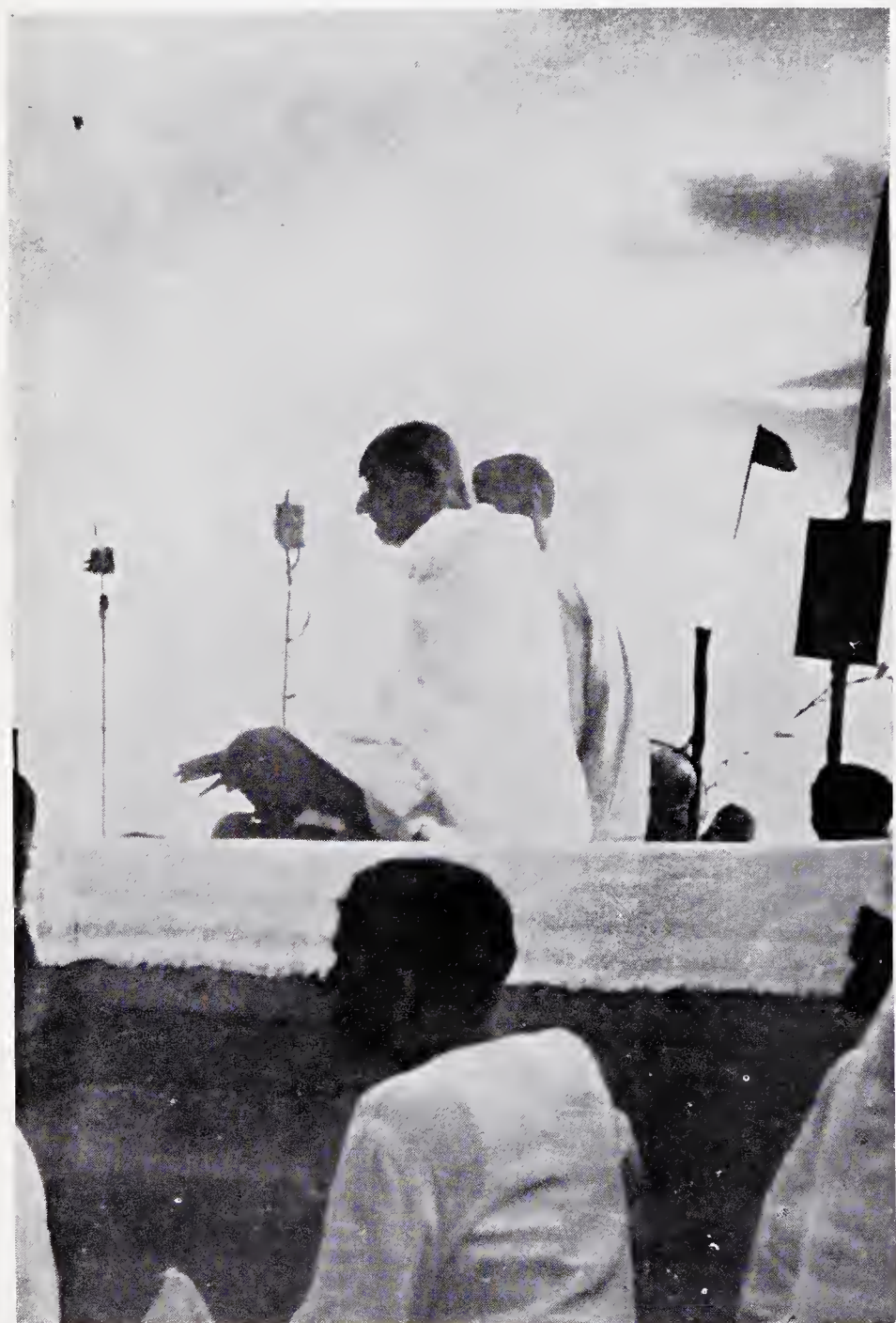
Bapu had discussions with . . . for over an hour. He is very much perturbed over Kashmir.

In reply to . . .'s five-page letter Bapu wrote, "Blind imitation of others is an indication of intellectual paralysis. Should one follow or gauge what is evil? How many Muslims were slaughtered in India and how many Hindus were butchered in Pakistan?—to engage in such an invidious controversy is to give a naked exhibition of one's small-mindedness. 'May God grant sanity to all men': it is this prayer which sustains me today. . . ."

Bapu finished his talk at 9.30. He took some exercise, and before going to bed he took my temperature. It was 101.6 degrees. In order to know these things and to keep abreast of the changing situation I would not lie down on bed. So Bapu was angry: "Only Mahadeva did so. If you don't like to lie down, you should not take ill either. It is one's duty to lie in bed as soon as one has temperature. Even if in your illness you do not give up this temptation for work I may forgive you but God cannot. He always has the scales of justice with Him. If you are so punctilious about bodily exertion, you will grow so weak that you will have to repay it with interest. (You will be confined to bed for a long period.) Mahadeva took to his bed only when he was to rest for ever."

Bapu did not allow me to press his feet. These days Bapu has very frequent recollections of

Mahadevabhai. Referring to the conflict between . . . Bapu said, "Today we miss Mahadeva as never before. Had he been alive, he would never have allowed things to come to such a pass." . . . Bapu fell asleep at about 10. It is intensely cold. He spoke to me about . . .'s going to bed.



Giving his post-prayer talk (in Bihar).
Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Frontier Gandhi, sitting by him.

Birla Bhawan, New Delhi
2-1-'48

As usual, prayer at 3.30. While brushing his teeth, Bapu asked me to take my temperature. Bapu too has caught cold ; I am keeping away from him today so that my cold may not affect him. Even then all are feeling the effects of cold by turns. The weather too is intensely cold. Sushilaben has developed a very hoarse voice. Chandben too is almost confined to bed. All of us are equally affected. But Bapu says in clear words, "If we remember Rama with a sincere heart and scrupulously obey the laws of nature, the surrounding air will have no effect on our bodies. The change of seasons in nature is for our good. Merciful nature ordains everything for the good of all creatures inhabiting the earth. But we cannot know her secrets and therefore blame her." I have still a temperature of 100 degrees. Bapu suspects typhoid. I had been nursing Meeraben, and perhaps this is its aftermath ! But I don't think so. Bapu did not allow me to sit at the prayer-meeting but asked me to listen lying.

All men are unhappy of themselves

After the prayer I fell asleep close to Bapu. Hence I do not know what Bapu did subsequently. But as usual he read letters and replied to them :

“Today man lives in fear of man. Why, every man fears his own neighbour, let alone the whole nation. We consciously make ourselves unhappy in spite of ourselves. We deceive ourselves. No one can harm others. I believe that man is responsible for his own unhappiness. This city seems like a land of the dead in spite of its being the capital. No man trusts another. Its quietness is due to the fear of the police. Why is it that swarajya won through non-violence needs to be protected by violence? I am searching my own heart. Far from despairing, I will show God that I must do or die. Let me see how far the present situation will deteriorate. I thank God that I have awakened to it.

Manu's illness

“Dear Manu is very ill these days. That girl is brimming with energy but she has become physically frail. I believe this is because I have been harsh in extracting work from her. After all there is a limit to which her body can bear it. I extracted more work from her brain than from her body. But I have the satisfaction that she has missed no opportunity of learning. She has become proficient in serving the country—if I could only restore her health! She herself is very careless about her health. She loses herself in ministering to me. You need not worry. But for my part I am deeply concerned about her health. It looks like typhoid.

“How are you all getting on? The situation in Bihar is very complicated. But what happens in Delhi now will decide the fate of all India. . . .”

Knowing the truth

“It says in the *Gita* that all action without perception is fruitless. This is quite true. I have had many experiences of it and others too must have had similar experiences. If action is combined with perception, faith comes of itself. For this, one has always to depend on truth. If one can know truth there is no more to do. As we can see our image in a mirror—even the tiny blemishes on our face—so we should first of all search our hearts. Only after that we can criticise others. Hardly can any man claim to be perfect. Therefore, it is my humble suggestion that instead of looking for faults in others you should examine your own. If my advice is acceptable to . . ., then alone we can consider the matter. Otherwise, he can ignore it.”

He wrote another letter to my *bapu*¹ : “I am, so to say, in a furnace. What will happen, it is difficult to say ; possibly some result may come out soon. Dear Manu has become thin and feeble. Her present condition is causing anxiety. For this I am as much to blame as she. I have made her labour physically as many as 18 hours a day, and have taken as much or even more brain work. After all she is a teen-ager of 15 or 16. Yet I believe if the name of God is impressed on her heart, she can never grow feeble. But how can I see it ? So long as I am not able to restore her health, I shall not be free from anxiety. I do not know what fate awaits her in this great sacrifice for the country. Many girls came to stay with me and have gone.

¹ Father.

Considering her age, Manu's share of service is perhaps greater than theirs. If I had not called her to my side, I would have been guilty of great injustice to her. I will be satisfied if I see her restored to perfect health.

"I cannot say how long I am to stay here. I must do or die ; there is no middle course.

"What is the state of your health ? I hope you are not on diet now. Dear Manu will write to you about other things. I am well even under so much pressure of work. This is God's grace.

Blessings from Bapu."

Bapu gave me the letters he had written and asked me to copy them. He went out for his constitutional, telling me to keep lying.

I had fever all day. I am feeling extremely weak. I do not know what people came to see Bapu. At night there was a talk about Chandben's marriage. Bapu decided that he would keep himself aloof from all marriages till Hindu-Muslim unity was achieved. Deva Prakash Bhai and Chandben are keen on their marriage. But they may put it off till unity has been achieved. Bapu's activities are indeed manifold. What with marriages, divorcees and the lot of refugees and what with Panditji's¹ and Sardar's² political problems, he surmounts all difficulties with fervent interest.

He spends a lot of time in explaining his stand to Devabhai and Chandben, so that they may not feel that Bapu's interest in them has flagged. To

¹ Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

² Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel.

tell the truth, everyone feels that Bapu is interested in him or her.

Sushilaben is making brisk preparations to go to America. Bapu dwells upon their problems with great concern and minute attention.

It is raining today. The day hung heavy on us. Kamalnayanji came in the evening. Bapu made him burst with laughter. When Bapu was going to the prayer-meeting it was raining, so he put on the same hat as he wore in Noakhali. It caused some surprise among the audience.

At today's prayer-meeting Bapu said, "You may have been surprised to see this hat. But it is precious to me. For one thing it was given to me by a Muslim peasant of Noakhali ; for another it serves the purpose of an umbrella. It is much cheaper than an umbrella, and it is a model of rural craftsmanship. If we live in villages we can make many such useful things.

"The psalm ('Show yourself, Darling of my heart') to which you have just listened is a morning psalm. In what a humble manner is the devotee wishing for a vision of the Lord ! O for strength to help such miserable suppliants ! God never sleeps. He always keeps awake.

"I have just received a letter from Allahabad. The sender writes that, barring certain exceptions, it is hardly possible to find a Muslim truly loyal to India. If a civil war were to start between us, even a puny Muslim child would cease to be loyal to India. Therefore, by hook or by crook Muslims should be made to leave India.

"I have to tell this friend that with that

mentality our *swarajya* will get into danger. Unless the truth is established, it is inhuman to blame them. Only a few days ago a lac of Muslims assembled at Lucknow and they declared that they would remain loyal to the country even at the cost of their lives. Does it become a nation to discredit such declarations? None the less, if anybody turns traitor, he can be shot down. But I want to make it clear that on my part I would not adopt such a course.

“If this mentality lasts, every country will have its fugitives. Supposing all the countries go to war, I shall not have the slightest desire to continue to live. But it is my firm conviction that so long as a handful of votaries of absolute truth and non-violence exist, all the countries will not think of waging war.”

Panditji came after the prayer. The situation in Kashmir has become so explosive that a war may start. On the other hand, princely states will soon be merged into the Union. None can predict how the princes will react. It would not be surprising if Junagadh and Kashmir prove to be danger-spots.

Sheikh Saheb¹ is carrying on bravely, but Sardar has some misgivings about him. Panditji, however, trusts him implicitly.

Within the Congress organisation all men indulge in personal recriminations against one another day after day, which is very painful; and it is Bapu who has to drink these potions of poison.

We went to bed at about ten. Before going to

¹ Sheikh Abdullah, the then Prime Minister of Kashmir.

bed I had a conversation with Bapu is going to write about it to Kanubhai. But . . . does not like it. The atmosphere is still somewhat charged with frustration. If Bapu gets angry, they will have a bad time.

Bapu went to bed after examining me. He asked me to drink plenty of hot water. He said, "Your physical weakness is really causing me great anxiety. Drink as much water as you can and take rest. If you are not inclined to sleep, lie down with your eyes closed and repeat the name of Rama. This is your duty and moral obligation. I was moved to tears to think that I needed nursing by others. Their obligations are mounting on me, and this makes me very sad. I have to bear heaps of obligations.

The Question of National Language and Script

4

Birla Bhawan, New Delhi
3-1-'48

Prayer as usual. Bapu examined me. My fever now looks like typhoid. Bapu has forbidden me to get up but I do get up and sit occasionally. Abha Bhabhi was sleeping near Bapu at night. Yet Bapu handed me water to drink at 2 o'clock in the night. I do not know in which previous birth Bapu owed me this debt.

Bapu has received . . . 's letter from Noakhali. Bapu says, "When a man undergoes suffering he always grows wiser. I have never experienced in my whole life what I am experiencing now as regards the ultimate destiny of man. I wish I had gone through such experience earlier in my life. God is revealing to me clearly what I could never imagine, and He is telling me to wake up to the situation. He is unfolding this drama to warn me.

"You must regain complete health ; only then I shall have peace of mind. You have not shown me your diary for two days. Give it to me today. See how even good women like . . . behave today. All this is not unknown to me. But only yesterday I said at the prayer-meeting that I had faith in other people. Man loses nothing by having faith. He can fulfil his duty. This is true life !"

My temperature was normal in the afternoon today. Bapu was very glad and told me to take good care now on.

In a letter today he wrote : "I have not yet got close to God but I am striving to that end. If I could get there, the lustre of my non-violence would shine everywhere.

"The situation here is very dangerous. Mountbatten himself is putting forth his best efforts to ease the situation in Kashmir. At any rate, Bengal and Bihar will not be consumed in the holocaust. If even a little disturbance takes place there, you will not find me alive. Convey this message of mine to all."

While talking to Rajendra Babu in the morning, Bapu looked very distressed. He said : "The relations between . . . are getting strained on this side of the border. This is having such bad consequences that people in Pakistan just expect them ! Mountbatten may well be making sincere efforts, but why should we allow him to take such a great interest in our internal domestic affairs ?

"The Congress is now losing its hold to such an extent that its structure is likely to crumble brick by brick. If I could get out of Delhi, I should like to tour the whole of India. We should remind ourselves of our former pledges and act up to them, or else we should admit that to rule over the country is one thing and to make speeches another. Even if these thoughts pinch us, we should make a declaration to that effect in the interests of our country. The Kashmir tangle is getting more complicated day by day, and if we were to take the

matter to the UNO, our honour would go to rack and ruin. First of all—if your health permits I would suggest that—you should visit every nook and corner of the country, and explain to the people the viewpoint of the Government in a dispassionate manner. If the office of the Congress President is made independent of any group, it will be to the advantage of both the Government and the people.”

Because of severe cold Bapu was late for his massage. He attended to his mail. . . . 's letter breathes fire. Bapu wrote to her: “I have your letter which is couched in bitter words. Is it proper to be so fiery? If iron is heated sparks fly from it. But the hammer, however violently it is, applied to it, does not get hot and catch fire. If you become a hammer, you will see all your wishes fulfilled. Of course, if a stream catches fire then it is nobody's fault.

Ashrams¹ must be self-sufficient

“I do not see any chance of leaving this place. I have to do or die. Perhaps you think there is quiet in Delhi. But it comes not from the heart but from arms. I am waiting for the voice of India. I have by me three or four girls to serve me. I am staying in Birla's spacious mansion, but I have no peace of mind. The girls are all attentive to me. I do not yet feel the need of your service. Of course, all the girls can take my leave and go whenever they like. Manu alone is my co-sharer in this sacrifice. The other girls have joined me casually and they can similarly leave me. I must say that Manu's

¹ Homes for social or religious workers.

service in this sacrifice has been remarkable. Only she is negligent of her health. How are you all getting on? How is Khadi Pratishthan¹ progressing? What is the population of the Ashram? Ashrams must not depend on others. I have arrived at the same decision about Sevagram. It should either stand on its own legs or be closed. Today ashrams have turned into homes for birds of passage.

“Think well before you arrive at any decision. If a man jumps into a swollen river, could the result be other than his being drowned?”

Many of Bapu's letters cover only three and a half lines, but sometimes they are replete with poetic fancy.

Massage and bath took an hour. During bath I shaved him. He said, “Don't be surprised if I adopt a different course of life. You will, of course, have a share in it but I do not want others to stay here. All are leaving Noakhali and coming here one by one on some pretext or other. This does not seem right. . . . must write to . . . after mature consideration. . . . is not firm in her mind and is deviating from her resolves. Were I to die here, there would be no more to do. But if some peace is established, I will begin life anew. The next trial will be more terrible. I am all ears to hear my inner voice. I am waiting for its call. Abha and Sushila cannot waver in the least. My resolve is not susceptible to changes in weather. The very people who have accused you—who have unfairly blamed my grand-niece of 16 or 17 years—will now adore you. The braggarts will melt away before me.

¹ Establishment for the propagation of home-spun cloth.

They can be got rid of by non-violence and love. In this matter all should practise self-introspection. Then it will be known what service they have done to mankind. If I were your true and holy mother, I would fall asleep in your lap, repeating the name of Rama and talking to you in the natural manner.

“But you do not keep well. It distresses me. It is true that you have been able to carry on in spite of your weak state of health. You are simple, frank and innocent. That is why God has blessed you with such fortitude. But the situation in Delhi is worsening fast. There is no unanimity in the cabinet. I am recounting all this to you, so that you may not be troubled when I do not remain with you in body—though I shall be present in spirit. Your constitution has grown very weak. It upsets me. I want you to understand this, if you can. Note today’s conversation on a piece of paper and hand it over to me. I shall revise it and give it back, so that you can send it to your brother. For some time I have not been able to go through your diary regularly ; I do not like my neglect.”

On hearing these words, I burst into tears. Patting me affectionately, Bapu said, “How can you pull on if you become nervous like this ?” I asked, “Are you thinking of going on a fast ?”

Bapu said, “I have not yet come to a decision but I shall have to. You might get unnerved, and that is why I am trying to prepare you now for the worst.”

When Bapu came out from his bath, Panditji had been waiting for him. Bapu gave him a gist of what had passed between us. At lunch time the

local maulan¹ came. He told them also, "It will be the test of your patience. Let us see what God ordains me to do."

Since Bapu had instructed me not to reveal to others what he had told me, I did not mention it to anyone. But it seems to me that Bapu may go on a fast unto death. He did the same at Calcutta.

After relaxing, he wrote the following answer to many questions concerning the national language.

Problem of the national language

Question : Whether the national language is called Hindi or Hindustani, is not a very controversial matter. In daily conversation current Hindustani will be used. Nobody denies that for advanced literature, science and similar subjects new terms will have to be borrowed from Sanskrit. Will there be any harm if this is made clear to all ?

Answer : "The first part of this question is all right. If everybody takes a word in the same sense, there is no trouble. It is not the name but its use that matters. If there is unanimity on usage, all objections to different names are futile.

"Why should the words for advanced literature and science be drawn from Sanskrit alone ? One should not be dogmatic on this score. A small committee can collect a vocabulary of current words.

"Suppose an English word is currently used in Hindustani. Why should we replace it by a pure Sanskrit word ? For *chair* shall we coin a Sanskrit word, *chatuspad-pithika* (four-legged seat), or

¹ Muslim preceptors.

unhesitatingly accept the current word *kursi* ? Such instances can be multiplied.

*The question of script

“It is the script which poses a problem. Although two scripts are in use, most people ask, and rightly so, whether the continuance of two scripts will not prove a useless burden in carrying on the work of the nation. Instead of two scripts why should we not accept one script which may be easy for all provinces or states ?

“I would like to know the implications of using two scripts. Does it mean that notifications of the Central Government are to be published in both the scripts ? Again, the telegrams which are issued from telegraph-offices, etc. will be written down in only one script. I would also like to know how the second script will be used in these places. I cannot subscribe to the view that the second script is to be retained to appease the Muslims. We have to consider which script will be conducive to national welfare without being unfair to any group. At the same time it would be wrong to think that the interests of Muslims will suffer by the adoption of *Nagri*.¹

“To my mind it will be necessary to use both the scripts for a limited period, so that those who do not know these scripts may gradually get acquainted with them. No doubt, all will adopt a common script ultimately.

“Even if we keep the two scripts, the one which is easier will hold the field. The main point is that Urdu should not be ousted. There is jealousy

¹ The script in which Hindi and Sanskrit are written.

behind this demand. This controversy had its roots in jealousy and that jealousy has become stronger now. As such, we who desire to see a united India, and that too without the use of arms, must find a place for both the scripts. Neither should we forget that there are many Hindus and Sikhs who are ignorant of the Nagri script. I have an abiding experience of this.

“This does not mean that millions will have to learn both the scripts. Only those whose work lies outside their province are to learn them. In the offices of the Central Government also there is no need to print everything in both the scripts. But the notifications are meant for all and must be printed in both the scripts. When there is bad blood between the two classes, it would be going against public opinion to drop Urdu. When telegrams, etc. will not be written in Roman characters, they will perhaps be written in Urdu or Nagri script. This I think is a minor issue. When we give up our infatuation for English or Roman script, our hearts and minds shall be so purged that we shall be ashamed of this controversy.

“We shall do nothing improper to appease anyone. But appeasement is not wrong in every case. Is it not good if all of us willingly adopt the same script? But even so, both the scripts must have currency at the present time.”

Besides this work, Bapu's meals, massage, spinning and other things follow the usual routine. Raj Kumariben came in the afternoon and Bapu had discussions with her on Kashmir. A war may break out between Pakistan and India. Bapu says,

“I will not live to see it. Will freedom have such a dreadful and tragie sequel?”

To all the visitors who came during the course of the day Bapu said one and the same thing : “The outcome of my stay at Delhi will soon be manifest.” He mentioned the same thing to me also in the morning. To me it appears that Bapu is greatly upset not by the quarrels in the country but by the pitiful domestic condition (the mutual distrust among Congress leaders), and he may decide to go on a long fast. It will be very risky for him to undertake a fast now. Only six months have elapsed since he performed a fast at Calcutta, and he has not yet recouped his lost energy.

I mentioned this to my brother in the evening. Today’s prayer-meeting was held at the Worlie camp. Sucheta Didi had made very good arrangements at this camp. The inmates of the camp were also sensible people. They were facing their sufferings smilingly and bravely.

At today’s prayer-meeting Bapu said, “I consider it my good fortune to get this opportunity of coming to your camp and talking to you. I have been able to fulfil today my long-felt desire to be in your midst. Brothers and sisters, you have come here in thousands, leaving behind all your belongings. I request you to join whole-heartedly in my prayer to God which has been chanted by these girls : O God ! Restore unity and peace to our land and bless us with sanity of mind.

“A man may possess any amount of wealth or amenities of life but he cannot be happy unless he has internal peace. All religions lay great stress on

the importance of truth. If truth is achieved, a man can enjoy boundless happiness, wherever he may be. He will have no worry about the future. God alone knows the future. . Even a great personality like Shri Rama Chandra could not know that on the day of his coronation he would have to repair to the forest and put on clothes of bark instead of his royal garment. But Ram Chandrajī's peace of mind did not depend upon external comforts ; he experienced peace in the inner recesses of his heart. Therefore, the forest and the crown were one and the same to him. Hindus and Sikhs and everyone of us should seek peace in the adversity which we have to face. If we follow in our lives the ideal set by Ram Chandrajī, we shall not fall a prey to such brutality.

“The first thing I was told was that the brothers and sisters dwelling in this camp were better organised than those in other camps. I can see this for myself. The experience of camp life is a kind of blessing. I have lived in camps for long periods, so it is no exaggeration to say that I am an expert in the subject of how life should be led in camps. But I cannot forget that you have to put up with many difficulties here. Many of you never knew what it was to suffer the least inconvenience. Yet you can forget the heyday of your life if you regard the adversity that has come upon you as your good fortune and adjust yourselves to the present circumstances. In 1899 when the Boer War began Englishmen left Transvaal and went to Natal. But they knew how to do everything down to the humblest job and everyone lived there the same

kind of life. An English engineer even worked as a carpenter with me.

“In short, men and women who are inmates of this camp should live on terms of equality and make it an ideal camp, so that people from all over the world and from India may pay a special visit to this camp. You have just heard the verse of ‘Ishavasya’.¹ It also means that you should dedicate all your possessions to God and take only as much as is necessary. If you act up to this verse, not only this camp but also Delhi, where the refugees have earned a bad name, will win fresh laurels and Delhi will become the nucleus of true and real happiness for all panic-stricken areas.”

After the talk many men and women obtained autographs of Bapu. Many feeble old men and women were anxious to touch his feet. We also learnt something of the arrangements for mess and other things in this camp.

Bapu has already visited many camps of Hindu refugees. In comparison with them, peace and devotion were more in evidence here in spite of many discomforts.

On the way back Bapu said, “In every camp there are devoted and orderly people. But if after their terrible sufferings they find that the organisers do not give them satisfaction, they will naturally be irritated. The organisers of this camp are full of the milk of human kindness and have every sympathy with the refugees in their sufferings. The sister in charge of the camp is very gentle, where-

¹ A sacred verse of the Kathopanishad which was recited daily in the morning prayers.

as in other camps it is not so. In dealing with these distressed refugees the organiser should be extremely modest and disciplined. In other camps I was surprised to see the women organisers in their fineries. They cannot exercise any influence.”

After returning from the camp Bapu had a walk. Panditji paid his usual visit. Bapu put his post-prayer talk in writing. It is half-past nine now. Panditji is going to leave in a short time. It appears that the Kashmir problem has upset everybody.

Birla Bhawan, New Delhi
4-1-'48

Prayer at 3.30 as usual. Talk with . . . while brushing the teeth. Kanubhai's letter about Perhaps all people will now know it. Bapu asked me to inform Naraindas Kaka too. Let us see what happens next ! All leaders are now in Delhi again, so Bapu wants to decide upon a suitable course of action by himself within a week. This is what he is thinking. While brushing his teeth, he said, "A conflict is going on in my mind. I have not been able to see the light yet. Still I feel I am on the way to seeing it. If you do not suffer from illness, even slightly, I shall manage everything else. You ought to drive away fever from your body."

Devabhai and Chandben are in a dilemma. Sushilaben is feverishly busy with preparations to go to America. She is also in a fix. From Bapu's frequent pronouncements it appears that he may leave Birla Bhawan and go to a Muslim quarter with the intention of living there all alone. I cannot guess correctly. I think that of all persons I am the most favoured of God. In his conversation with everyone—even with Panditji and Rajendra Babu—Bapu says, "I am thinking about something. According to my plan only Manu will stay with me. I do not need anyone else. Let me see what is in store for me."

After the prayer Bapu read Parikshitlal's letter about the admission of Harijan children to hostels. Agreeing with the views expressed in the letter, Bapu added the following note at the end: "If the students are sincere none can hold them back. In these times wardens cannot have their way against students—more so if right is on the side of students and wardens act unjustly. The wardens are to look after the messing arrangement and are not concerned with other controversial matters. In any case, Harijans must be admitted to hostels as a matter of right and with honour."

He wrote to a girl: "Children should never write with a pencil and likewise with a fountain pen. Writing improves if reed pens are used. I hope you help your mother in domestic work. Spin regularly for half an hour. Make your body strong by exercise. Have you learnt to bake bread and cook vegetables? Well, when we meet next, do treat me to them. Laugh and play. Manu will write to you more.

Blessings from Bapu."

To a sister: "Who knows of the morrow? I am not certain about myself. But I am on the road to light. Your leucorrhoea should go. No salt is to be taken. Pulses act as poison in this condition, as also spices or chillis. Hip-baths, mud-plasters on the abdomen, and rest are useful. Had you been staying with me, I would have asked you to fast frequently. But if you follow this treatment and sincerely repeat the name of Rama, you will certainly get well. About 75 per cent of women in India suffer from this ailment. The main causes

are : shyness on the part of women, ignorance of the subject, unnatural living, improper diet, etc. It would not be wrong to say that of all diseases this one is the most terrible and painful, and women have no idea of its terrible nature. If I were relieved of all this work, I would put an end to all gynaeceological diseases by nature cure. I am confident of it, but today it is mere wishful thinking.

“Chand has not fully recovered yet. Her ailment is mental rather than physical. Abha and Manu are well. Sushila is due to arrive today from Bombay. I am writing this in the morning. Perhaps my reply may be delayed but you must write regularly. Manu will write about other things.

Blessings from Bapu.”

Communal animosity in Delhi

During Bapu's walk Rajendra Babu met him. He dwelt on the grave situation in Kashmir. Bhai Saheb gave the news that communal animosity was again aroused in Delhi. Even women were taking part in the disturbances now. In a Muslim quarter women and children entered a Muslim's house. The police had to use tear-gas. Today's papers have come out with rumours of war between India and Pakistan. Some people are speculating about the position of Mountbatten in the event of war. No wonder, the English may have a hand in it. Bapu says : “Whatever it is we shall know in due course. But I do not believe that the British are directly involved in it. Even so, we are safe because Mountbatten is our Governor-General.”

Day by day the situation is getting worse every-

where. The care-taker government in Junagadh has its own disorders. Bhavanagar will shortly transfer responsible government to the people. A date has been almost fixed. But the Maharaja, Pattani Saheb and Balwant Bhai are agreed that responsible government should be made over to Bapu. Bapu says, "If I could leave Delhi, everything would be possible."

The sky is overcast today. We had a shower of rain at night. There being no sunshine, Bapu's massage was delayed. Bapu could not take a nap during massage. He is worried over the announcements made at Delhi and in Pakistan about Kashmir. He studied Bengalee as usual.

At lunch time Muslim friends came as usual and reported : "We are in danger. Something or other happens in Delhi every day. We have nobody to fall back upon except you. The police is helpless."

Only humanitarianism can save us

Bapu said, "You are right. When this is the state of law and order in our country, what else can we expect ? There is a world of difference between our police and that of England. There people join the police service out of a sense of duty and here they regard it as a means of livelihood. What a great difference ! When we realise that this is our own country, only then the situation will improve. When we awake to this sense of duty, the freedom of our country will be renowned all over the world. There will be no need for communism, or socialism, or capitalism. Then we shall need nothing else but humanitarianism. Today we have lost our humanitarianism and this is the result of it.

“Besides this, I should like to say one thing more. As far as possible exert your influence on your Muslim brothers and sisters and pacify them. Then Hindus and Sikhs will come to their senses of themselves. You may not have to wait for it now quite as long as you have already waited. There is Pakistan, clamouring for war. You have to think over it seriously. If you agree to war, I have nothing to say. But if you disagree, you should make an open declaration. Thereby you will be doing a great service to the Muslims of India.”

After they were gone, Bapu relaxed for some time. But it appears that today's disturbance in Delhi has made Bapu very anxious. Pandit Sunderlal also had long discussions with Bapu on the disturbance. From successive bad reports Bapu surmises that a storm is brewing. The report brought by Sunderlal had the same reaction. But in this predicament we cannot say anything one way or the other, because when the evil is deep-rooted Bapu does not consider which side is more to blame.

It was very cloudy all day. It started to rain at about 4. Even so, some people came to the prayer-meeting. At first we thought that the prayer should be held indoors. But Bapu said, “Since people have taken so much trouble and have come from distant places, I ought to go there.”

Greeting the congregation, Bapu said, “I take it that you have come here not to satisfy your curiosity but to offer your devotion to God.

“Today I have to address you on a different topic. In today's papers and everywhere else

there is a talk about the Union and Pakistan going to war. How unfortunate it is that we have begun to talk of war when we have hardly completed six months of independence. Pakistan has announced today that India has approached the UNO for sanction to declare war against Pakistan. I am surprised at this downright lie. It is the case of a thief accusing the police-officer of his own crime. You have a right to ask me whether it would be proper for India to ask the UNO for justice. To this my answer is twofold. To seek justice is good as well as bad. Good, because in a way incursions are still taking place into Kashmir and it is suspected that Pakistan has a hand in them. If Pakistan dares to deny the truth of this, it will not satisfy me.

“If Kashmir were to ask the Union for help, the Union should help it as a neighbour and friend. If the Union is mistaken in this, we should leave it to divine dispensation. It is the policy of the Union to help a neighbour if the latter appeals for help. But to me the announcement made by Pakistan is a grievous misrepresentation. Before making such a grave announcement it should have consulted our Government. They say publicly that they want to co-operate with the Union, but in reality they act counter to their statement. Pakistan has been established as a theocratic state, hence such a Pakistan should be *pak* or holy in every respect. I confess that both the countries have made mistakes. But are we to keep alive the tradition of those errors? If both the countries went to war, a third powerful country would overpower us, and thus we should lose our hard-won freedom which

we have achieved after suffering * endless oppression and sacrificing thousands of lives during the last 150 years. That would be the height of folly.

“We have not yet lost anything. The leaders of both the countries should establish mutual trust, calling on God as a witness. Even if the matter has been taken to the UNO and we withdraw it, the UNO will have no objection to it. I will whole-heartedly pray to God to spare us this war. If a war is decided upon, at least I do not want to be a witness to it. But I want to make it clear that it is far better to fight openly than to harbour secret enmity and to conspire against each other.

“Peace has not yet come to the heart of Delhi. Last night some people, leading women and children in front of them, entered the houses of Muslims, and this led to violent assaults. At last the police had to use tear-gas. Of course, afflicted people have to bear their sufferings, but if they act with restraint in times of distress, the suffering will not aggravate further. By indulging in violent assaults you increase the worries of the Government instead of helping them. In free India ambassadors from all over the world have come to reside permanently. We mock non-violence by demonstrating to them our quarrels. On the one hand, we claim that we have won our freedom without shedding a drop of blood ; on the other, we make boasts of ourselves by massacring our own people. Is it bravery to attack others by leading children and women ahead of us ? In the old days Muslims indulged in wholesale killings by driving cows before them, so that Hindus may not

attack them on the front. By misusing our women in this way we only mock them. We should feel ashamed of ourselves. May God grant you sanity.”

After the prayer Bapu walked up and down in the corridor. During his saunter, brother told him that people were happy at the removal of controls, and prices had come down.

While talking to Zakir Saheb on methods of teaching and basic education, Bapu said : “Every pupil receiving basic education must be entirely self-supporting, otherwise I shall think that not only basic education but all educationists like you have been failures. After all what percentage of people in the country is educated ? Hardly five, but do the others not possess brains ? They have that virtue, but on account of poverty they have to live in ignorance of the alphabet. Therefore, the country’s economic level and education are like twins. If one of these problems is solved the other will take care of itself. If I had the choice and somebody employed me, I would like to be a teacher. Unless we can live on small incomes, the country cannot rise. If there is an art by which we can live economically, it is basic education. Therefore, it should be made universal. At the same time every student who receives this education must provide for himself food, clothing and shelter by his own labour. It is easy in this country. But God alone knows how far my feeble voice will be heard.”

Chandwaniji translated Bapu’s Hindi talk into English but Bapu had to make many corrections in it. Panditji came at night on his usual visit, and stayed for an hour. After taking exercise, Bapu

got ready to go to bed at 9.30. As he lay in bed, I massaged Bapu with oil as usual, and Bapu enquired how everybody, sick or healthy, had fared during the day. In spite of his hectic activities and multifarious discussions during the day Bapu does not forget one thing. How many motions did everybody have and what was his or her temperature? How much did he or she eat and how many baths did he or she take? He made detailed enquiries about these things.

Birla Bhawan, New Delhi
5-1-'48

Prayer as usual. Today being his day of silence, Bapu had to write everything himself. After the prayer I took him indoors, and then I had a nap.

Writing in Hindi on the subject of khadi,¹ Bapu said that people raised the following questions :

‘After independence the difference between pure khadi, uncertified khadi, mill cloth and foreign cloth has been narrowed down considerably. If anybody spins and weaves as much cloth as he needs for his own use, then it does make a difference, because it is symbolical of a particular line of thought. But one does not spin as much yarn as will suffice to make all the cloth that one needs. Therefore, people buy khadi from a khadi bhandar.² One does not spin all the yarn that has to be given in exchange for cloth. Pure khadi has not shown any signs of improvement. Uncertified khadi has many varieties. The probable reason is that those who make pure khadi are not interested in improving it. Wages have now gone up to such an extent that the question of a living wage has lost its importance. So, if necessary, there is no harm in buying uncertified khadi.

¹ Hand-spun and hand-woven cloth.

² A store-house for khadi.

‘There is not enough cloth in the country to go round. The national Government itself imports foreign cloth. To import or not to import foreign cloth is at the option of the Government, and yet it imports it. So what harm is there in buying it?’

Answer : “Only certified khadi is genuine. The meaning of the word ‘certified’ may not be quite clear in this context. In its true meaning, ‘certified’ khadi is that khadi for which yarn has been bought at its full price, which has been woven by paying proper wages and whose selling price has been fixed not for profiteering but for the benefit of the country. Apart from the khadi which is self-made by the wearer of it, all khadi which is purchased from the market must be certified for the public. There can be only one organisation that can give this certificate, and it is the Charkha Sangh. Therefore, certified khadi is only that which has been given a certificate by the Charkha Sangh.

“All khadi except this one is uncertified khadi. If no certificate is obtained by a dealer, something must be fraudulent. Why should we purchase spurious khadi? No doubt, there is a difference between genuine and spurious stuff.

“One can question the validity of a certificate. If its validity is in doubt, it is our duty to expose it. It is not right to shirk this duty and to buy any khadi indiscriminately. It is possible that people may have become so demoralised that we cannot hold our ground among them, or we may be mistaken in what we think right. But a representative of the people will not go to the extent of doubting the validity of a certificate.

“Undoubtedly, there is a difference between khadi, indigenous mill-made cloth and foreign cloth. Foreign rule has gone ; so how can it be right to import foreign cloth ? To think so is to betray our ignorance of our opposition to foreign rule. Foreign rule entailed a heavy loss on the country. To put an end to this tremendous loss must be the first fruit of freedom.

“It boils down to this. In independent India only pure khadi has a place. It is that which promotes the welfare of the people and gives them a status of equality.”

Letter from Sevagram

Munnalalbhai came from Sevagram today. He acquainted us with the condition of the Ashram at Wardha and spoke about other old and new happenings. Bapu firmly holds that the Ashram should stand on its own legs. The dispensary has been separated from the Ashram ; on the whole it is being run properly. Bapu wrote on a piece of paper : “If the constructive work at Sevagram is not self-supporting, I will take it that those in charge are unmindful of their duty. My conception is that the constructive programme should be an integrated unit, in other words, wholly independent.

“I have not yet arrived at any final conclusion. My going to Sevagram is a mere rumour. Aeroplanes are multiplying day by day, aren't they ? While sitting under the celestial roof, I wish to look up and listen to the loud drone sounding overhead ! When I see the planes, I feel that the whole world is smitten with the desire to work. If there is any idler in the world, it is I.” (The whole atmosphere

was charged with cross currents of humour and gravity.)

Bapu wrote a long letter to Kanubhai who is at Noakhali, but . . . did not approve of it and so it may not be sent. Bapu is in great suspense. Sushilaben was to sail for America this month, but now her departure has been postponed to May. She was pleased at this, because she did not at all like to part with Bapu at this juncture.

Today Sushilaben gave massage to Bapu. During massage he had lessons in Bengalee according to his daily schedule. The cold is so intense that the body cannot shake it off. Even in this weather Bapu sits in ice-cold water for his 'bath'. For brushing his teeth and washing his face also he uses cold water.

While shaving himself in the bath he had a nap for ten minutes. Panditji came and went away after a short conversation. Indiraben also came with her little one. Bapu gave an orange to the child. The child was well pleased and played a long time in Bapu's arms.

Bapu might catch cold. He has made a change in his dict.

The end of Hindu-Muslim clash in sight ?

The maulanas came at the usual hour. They complained : "Hindus harass the Muslims in Hindu quarters and they have arms as well." Bapu wrote to say, "If you give proofs of this it will be very helpful. It has been reported to me that Muslims too are well equipped with arms. Therefore, it is your first responsibility to request your Muslim brethren to surrender whatever arms they possess, and those

arms should be made over to me. After this, if the Government does not give full protection to the Muslims, I shall die before letting them die.”

There were also other interviews as usual. Subhadraaben Gupta also alluded to the terrorization of the Muslims. Bapu wrote : “Instead of hearing this complaint from a girl like you, if I had heard that Subhadra was done to death while protecting the Muslims, I would have been beside myself with joy. I fancy that, only when Hindu men and women sacrifice their lives so bravely, this struggle will come to an end.”

Mud applications, spinning, writing of letters, etc. went on as usual. Today Bapu scrutinized the Harijan Fund and other accounts. He instructed that the surplus khadi was to be sent to the Harijan Colony for the use of Harijan children. “Out of the khadi presented to me we cannot keep back even a kerchief length over and above what we need.”

The result of lifting the controls

In the evening Bapu wrote down his talk. In today's talk he dwelt on the controls and gave details of the prices of grain prevailing then and now.

In his talk he stated, “I am receiving congratulatory telegrams from all quarters in the wake of the lifting of the controls. There is a large section of people who advocate decontrol of the remaining commodities also. At my request a big trader has addressed a letter to me in English, setting forth his views.”

Comparing the prices ruling now and during the

period of controls, he jots down the variations as follows :

<i>Commodity</i>	<i>Unit of weight</i>	<i>Current price (after decontrol)</i>	<i>Price ruling during the period of controls</i>
		Rs.	Rs.
Sugar	one maund	37 8 0	80 to 85
Gur	„	13 to 15	30 to 32
Shakkar	„	14 to 18	37 to 45
Sugar	a bag of half-seer	0 11 0	1 8 0 to 1 12 0
Sugar (khandsari)	one maund	30 to 35	75 to 80

Thus the prices of sugar and allied commodities fell by 50 per cent. The prices of foodgrains are noted below :

<i>Commodity</i>	<i>Unit of weight</i>	<i>Current price</i>	<i>Price ruling during the period of controls</i>
		Rs.	Rs.
Wheat	one maund	18 to 20	40 to 50
Rice (Basmati)	„	25	40 to 45
Maize	„	15 to 17	30 to 32
Gram	„	16 to 18	38 to 40
Moong	„	23	35 to 38
Urd	„	23	34 to 37
Arhar	„	18 to 19	30 to 32
Gram dal	„	20	30 to 32
Moong dal	„	26	39
Urd dal	„	26	37
Arhar dal	„	22	32
Mustard	„	65	75

“Control has been lifted from woollens and other cloths, therefore the market is being flooded with them. The price of silk has gone down by 50 to 65 per cent.

“People guess that controls may be lifted any time from cotton cloth and yarn. Hence their prices have appreciably gone down in sympathy.”

“But I believe that if the remaining commodities were also decontrolled, the price of every one of them will decline from 60 to 65 per cent. Besides, it is certain that all varieties of cloth will improve in quality. So long as goods are in short supply, their export should be stopped.

“Petrol was also controlled under conditions of war. In my opinion it is no longer necessary to control it. Because of this control a certain transport company is reaping a rich harvest of profit. If petrol were decontrolled and that particular company were not given the contract for transport on that particular route, I could say that an owner of a single vehicle would make a net income of over Rs. 300. But today a roaring trade is carried on in the permits for petrol. Decontrol will also solve the problem of exchanging houses and food-grains. Your fight for the abolition of controls proved a great blessing for the general public.”

“Judging from available figures, I believe that this step will hardly entail any loss. Even so, if anybody raises an objection against this step and substantiates it with facts and figures, I shall feel very grateful to him.

“If an overwhelming majority of people suggest a particular course of action, the people’s representa-

tives need not have the least fear in implementing it. Supposing that they meet with disappointment in that course, controls can be reimposed upon the people.

“I understand that of the total world output of petrol India produces only one per cent. But this should not disappoint us. Our motor vehicles have never come to a standstill for lack of petrol. We are not a warlike nation and so we do not need much petrol. But suppose we need more petrol and the total world output of petrol remains unchanged, will the world be poorer for our increased demand? Let not people who may criticize me for my ignorance take it as a joke. I have to learn, and if I do not exhibit my ignorance, how can I acquire knowledge?

“To be brief, if there is such a great deficiency of petrol in this country, how does it find its way to the black market? A certain friend has written to me that if a man owns only one truck or lorry and it is licensed to run only along one route, he can earn ten to fifteen thousand rupees in one month. If this be true, it is certainly alarming. It means that controls are a curse for the poor and a blessing for the rich. If the system of granting monopolies and imposing controls has such a pernicious effect, it should be done away with without a moment's further thought.

“Again, to my mind there is no sense in imposing control on cloth. Because, if we have not given up the use of khadi, why should there be control on cloth? None of the arguments for control on cloth can be substantiated. We have enough cotton and

crores of hands. In villages every home has a charkha. Likewise hand-loom can be plied and one can very easily produce sufficient cloth for one's needs, as if it were a play. With regard to cloth I am firmly convinced that there is no need to raise such a hue and cry. In the same way there is no need to use motor-cars and lorries. During the period of our slavery the primary function of our railways was to serve the army and the next function was to carry cotton to the ports and to bring imported cloth into the country. But for our 'Calico', which is called Khadi and which is made in our own villages, there is absolutely no need to build up a single centre or port. It is our laziness and our ignorance which stand in the way of our progress. And what is more, in order to hide these vices we look down upon our villages. Is it not highly disgraceful?"

Today's discourse was very long. On days of silence Bapu's discourses are always long.

When Bapu broke his silence Birlaji and other members of the family met him. During the hours of silence all is quiet. When Bapu breaks his silence, a round of hustle and bustle starts again.

Almost the whole day was spent in writing, reading and repose. Still Bapu said he was feeling weary. Maybe he is going to catch cold and that accounts for it.

Munnalalji began his talk but it was postponed to another time since he is going to stay here.

At about 10 o'clock we got ready to have a

sound sleep. Bapu talked to Panditji on Pakistan's statement about Kashmir published in the *National Herald*. Bapu is of opinion that nationalist Muslims in the Union should also declare their views on the subject, whatever they may be.

Birla Bhawan, New Delhi
6-1-'48

Bapu got up 10 minutes before prayer time. Last night it was severely cold. Bapu had a discussion with . . . about Kanubhai's long letter. Referring to one of the points, Bapu said, "It seems that I have yet a lot to think about, because people do not work quietly wherever they are staying. All of them seem to think that all business can be disposed of only by staying at Delhi. They cannot give up the temptation of living in cities. It is on the basis of villages that cities like Delhi, Calcutta and Bombay have sprung up. Instead of improving our moral standards of life have considerably deteriorated. As a result rowdyism and lawlessness are on the increase. Therefore, if we do not strike at the root of this evil and only indulge in long discourses on the philosophy of life, it won't do. We shall have to assign work to others and put in our own labour. That is the touchstone for the inmates of ashrams. If they come out true in the test, well and good ; otherwise, I will declare my incapacity for this work and adopt a new course. I rely on what is true today or what appears to be true. If something was true yesterday (in the past) I will accept it, otherwise I will not lose a moment in rejecting it. Therefore, you will have to think over it. I am what I am. If I discover any flaw in this great sacrifice, I will lay it before you in its entirety.

For people in general put absolute trust in me and I simply cannot betray that trust. I identify myself with the people and the people identify themselves with me. Therefore, I have no individual existence. I want you all to understand this clearly."

Today Bapu himself went through the mail. If Bapu gets some success in Delhi, he would like to visit Kashmir.

The local Muslims complained that the refugees wanted to grab the houses of Muslims. They would not accept any other accommodation, if offered to them. Bapu said, "Why do they exhibit their bravery here? If they had been so brave, why did they leave their native land? I would not have minded if they had offered resistance there."

The pocket or the desire for worldly possessions

Bapu shaved himself in the bath. My *kurta* (shirt) was torn. I had not noticed it, but Bapu did and bade me stitch it up. But it was so rotten that it could not bear a straight seam, and Bapu realised this. He said to me, "If you unstitch your pocket and patch it on there, the patch will fit well. After all what need have we for a pocket? Our wants have increased because we are accustomed to having pockets. If one has a pocket, one wants to put something in it. If there were no pocket, perhaps one would not desire to store up a good deal."

Bapu has a way of associating philosophic ideas even with trifling things.

Bapu has caught a bad cold. He has a hoarse

throat. He sips hot water through the nose. Perhaps he has to do so on account of cold, cloudy weather and rain.

Khurshcdden came. She caused Bapu to hold his sides with laughter, and said, "It was well enough you did not go to Panipat. Otherwise, you would have enacted the Battle of Panipat there once again (that is, performed a fast or something similar). I was greatly worried about it."

Bapu said, "The possibility of a fast is always there. It seems to me that I must 'do or die'. I must choose one of these two courses.

Even when Bapu and other great men say something in sport there is a good deal of gravity in it. Who knows what Bapu is going to do ?

The Remembrance of Ba

... is to go abroad today, and so some silk clothes were ordered and brought. If khadi is taken to foreign countries, very few clothes would go into a box. They would also be difficult to wash.

Bapu was distressed. "Such pleas are false. What is the harm if fewer clothes are taken ? If men like ... do not go with khadi on, what influence will our country have ? Need I tell this ? I cannot even imagine such a thing. Oh, how God has opened my eyes to it ! So long I was blind to it. Tell him not to do anything, simply because Bapu says so or likes it. Let him do what he thinks right, or likes, or feels pleasure in.

"Now I see what is happening through lack of understanding. How noble Ba was in comparison with these educated people ! In all her actions she was perfectly, constantly and unhesitatingly loyal

to her ideals. I have come across many women (who would be branded 'uneducated' according to modern standards), such as Shakri, Durga and Gomti. When I see these women of my Ashram I bow to them. They have never wished for prominence or fame through newspapers or propaganda. Yet I must say that in the struggle for freedom their share was remarkable." This incident made Bapu sick at heart. I little thought that it would have this effect. I only put my signature and took the parcel addressed to . . ., when it was brought, and handed it to Bapu. Bapu asked me to open it and see what was inside. He said, "If anybody asks about it, tell him that it was I who had it opened What pride of place has the unfortunate khadi now? If in this era of freedom khadi meets the same fate as this old man has met, freedom may survive but the people cannot. You will outlive me and then you will recall that the forecast of this old man was not altogether incorrect."

Krishnanbhai Nayar came. He does a lot of relief work. He does not come on any special business with Bapu. Many a time he comes merely to enquire after Bapu and goes away after a chat with brother or ourselves.

The Raja and Rani of Mandi also came. The Raja gave to Bapu a cheque for Rs. 101 and the Rani presented to him her diamond ring. They also gave a shawl. But Bapu quipped, "Now I do not need these things; I need yourselves." They said, "We are at your disposal."

Hakim Ajmal Khan's son came. He said, "You are

the only friend of Muslims. Had you not been here, we should have been friendless.”

Bapu said, “God alone is the saviour of all. What protection can a man give to another man? But you must create confidence in the Muslim community and try to make them surrender whatever weapons they possess.”

Rameshwariben and Brijlal Nehru also came. Brijlalji suggested certain yogic poses for the cure of Bapu’s cold. Pointing his finger at me, Bapu said, “If you can restore this girl to perfect health, I shall venture to put her under your care. Apart from this, if Rama’s name resides in her heart, nothing will ail her.”

Brijlalji said to me in fun, “Cut open your heart and show whether Rama’s name is there. But this power can also be acquired by practising yogic poses.”

A blot on our culture

At today’s prayer-meeting Bapu said, “I am still receiving reports to the effect that displaced people coerce Muslims to make them vacate their houses. For this reason Muslims have to vacate their houses under threat and live under the open sky. It is no joke to live in the open in this unbearable cold. There is rainfall besides. Why do the refugees insist upon occupying the houses of Muslims? If they try to get possession of houses other than those of Muslims, I can understand that there is a real shortage of houses. If they try to drive me, a sick girl and all others from this Birla House, I can understand that. But to try to oust an innocent Muslim family will be regarded as a blot upon our

culture. You must know well that the consequences of the mentality to drive away the Muslims from this capital city will be bad indeed.

True democracy

“Today I have to say a few words on true democracy. You may be aware that many years ago the Raja of Aundh granted responsible government to his people and that Appa Saheb also spent his life in the service of his people. Now the Raja and the leaders of his state have practically decided to merge their state into the Union. The rulers whose states are thus merged into the Union will be given an annuity for their personal expenses. But the Raja of Aundh is one who does not want to put the slightest burden on his subjects. He will accept only such remuneration as will be paid to him for his service to the people. He has sent me a letter, inquiring whether the panchayat¹ he had set up in his state will remain intact. I cannot give an authoritative answer to this question, but, as I see it, I can say that the state will have the same administrative set-up as will be decided upon for the whole of India after the merger of states into the Union. There is nothing in our constitution to prevent people from having panchayats if they so desire.

The State of Aundh may well cease to exist, but the entity of the group of villages which go by that name cannot be blotted out. It will stay. India may or may not have a panchayat. But if a body functions to serve the people and does its duty as

¹ A body of five or more persons for managing certain things in a village or group of villages.

part of a larger group, no one will take away that right. In Aundh the panchayat system has been introduced for the welfare of the people. True democracy cannot come by occupying the chair of the pradhan.¹ In reality, it can be inaugurated only with the co-operation of every individual, whether living in a village or town.

“Writing to me on the subject of the balance of trade, a correspondent says, ‘It is essential that in India the imports should be kept lower than the exports. If the present adverse balance of trade continues, the wealth of India will dwindle to nothing. We should stop the imports of toys and other similar things that are not essential. Today India sends out raw materials and imports finished goods in exchange. This will impoverish India.’ I endorse the views of this friend and hold that India should be self-sufficient in the greatest possible measure. This will automatically put an end to all controversies. Neither India nor other countries will be able to exploit one another. Contrary to this, they will exchange goods in a spirit of co-operation.”

Bapu had a walk after the prayer. He walked with his eyes closed. Just after the walk Panditji came. Fresh outrages have broken out in Kashmir on a large scale. Bapu talked about it for an hour. After Panditji had left, Bapu washed his feet, took exercise and got ready to go to bed. I pressed his feet as on other days and massaged them with oil. Bapu inquired after everybody. Chandben is still feeling very weak.

¹ The president of a panchayat.

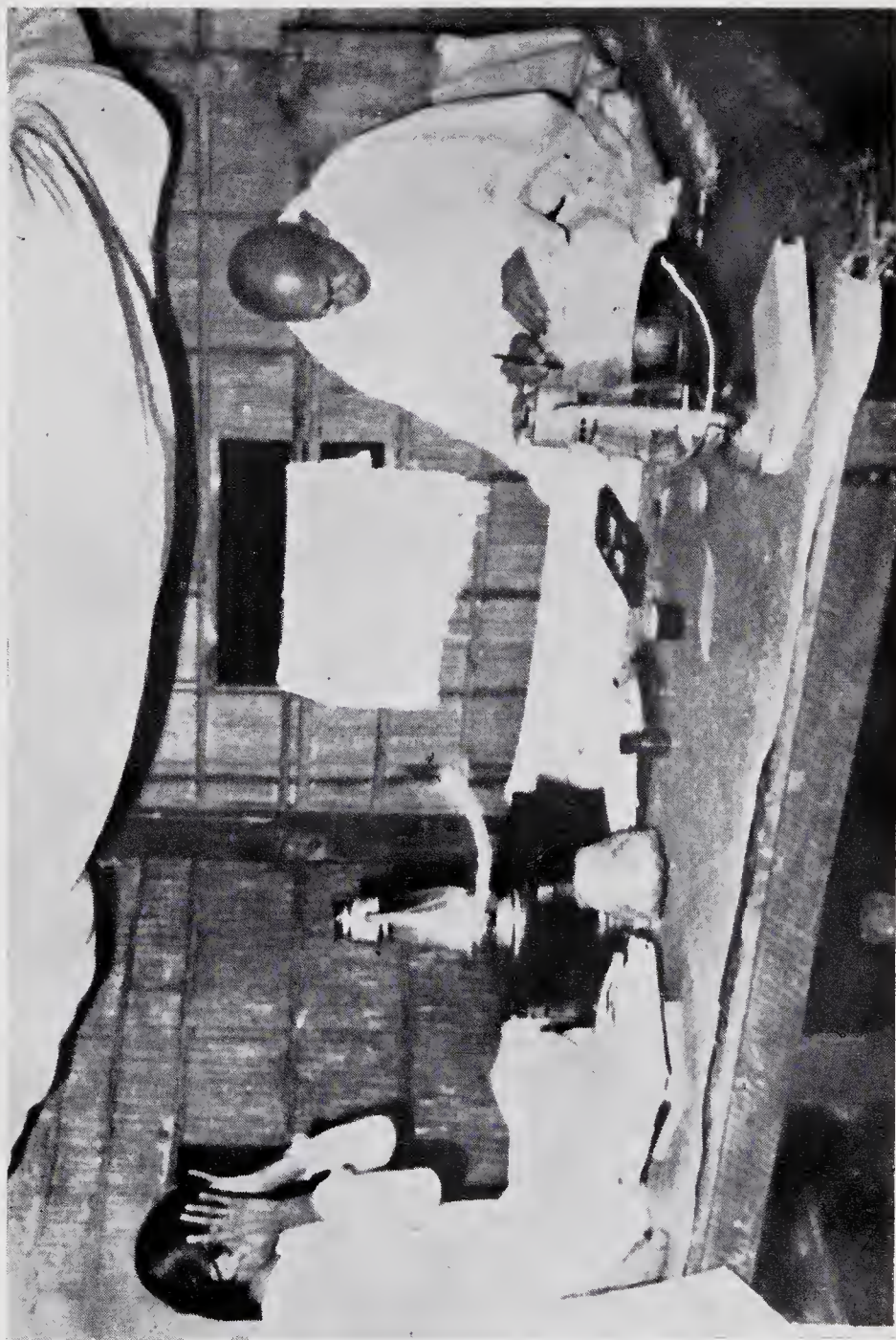
Birla Bhawan, New Delhi
7-1-'48

Shivering through poverty

As usual, Bapu got up at 3.30 to say his prayer. It seems that his cold and cough have got worse again. I myself am suffering from cold and cough. I took Bapu indoors and gave him letter-paper to write on. Some empty covers of letters were lying unused. Bapu picked them and cut them up nicely into a letter-pad. I asked : "Do your hands not shiver with cold ?" Bapu replied, "Natural cold is very useful to man. I shiver to think when my poverty will come to an end. Probably you do not feel the pangs of poverty in this palace. That is why you have thus piled up the envelopes and pieces of paper. Only those who have to study in poverty know the value of blank pieces of paper. They will not keep them unused in this way. It must be done day after day.

I was surprised for a while to know that Bapu did not fail to observe what was lying on Bishanbhai's table, and that he could do a job by himself without letting others know of it.

After this he went through the letters and wrote this note : "I am greatly upset at the reports from Sind. I am desirous of going to Sind but I dare not go there. When one's own house is on fire and one goes to the rescue of others, the fire will burst



Working at 2 a.m. Noakhali, Authoress sitting in front.

into a blaze. On the other hand, if one succeeds in saving one's own house, it may be of some help to others."

In another letter he wrote : "It would be sheer folly on the part of one who resides in a river to have the hardihood to get to grips with a crocodile. Therefore, people who cannot observe the rules of the Ashram had better go away and take up some other welfare work. I have no time to write more in this connection.

"I hope we may be able to do something here soon. At present the feelings of the people are inflamed. Today we are acting like beasts. God will guide us as He wills. We should not give up our efforts.

"I could not take a nap today. Some time was spent in attending to Manu's work and going through the mail. The pressure of work is so great here that unless I read the letters just after prayer I cannot reply to them. After that there is a stream of visitors. I am determined to do or die here. I cannot say what will happen. I am seeking light and am even able to see its dim rays. If I am able to see the complete light, sincere amity can be brought about in Delhi. I have written this much with great difficulty. How are your people? How are you getting on? Do write to Manu from time to time. She will write to you about other things. I have not yet been able to improve her health. She has grown very lean since she served me at Noakhali. If she is able to recoup her health, it will give me infinite satisfaction. If she takes rest for two months and keeps her spirits cheerful, as I have advised her,

I will attend to all external remedies. At present I am not doing anything for her, because I am not able to give her proper attention. If I am able to achieve some success here, my next job will be to make Manu as strong as a wrestler. Otherwise, she may well die. I am writing this in fun."

After replying to letters Bapu went out for a walk. During his walk he talked about Sind. It has been reported today that Gopalaswami Ayyangar will start tomorrow to participate in the discussions on Kashmir at the UNO.

When Bapu returned from his walk, I washed his feet and got ready for the massage. During massage he learnt Bengalee, and fell into a nap while reading the paper.

In the bath he gave me a talk on health. I said, "But your health is not good either." Bapu said, "I am now 78 years old and you are only 17. When you have grown to be 78, you can then think of competing with me ! I am not joking. I am hard pressed for time. But as I have taken the vow 'to do or die' here, I will have to take a similar pledge on your behalf, namely, 'to get well or die'. I have written this in a letter to your sister. If you have not seen it yet, you may see it now."

Bapu has left off using soap while shaving. Drawing his attention to it, I said, "You cannot have a quick shave without soap." Bapu said, "Silly girl ! You have side-tracked the issue." I laughed so heartily that Bapu could not help laughing, too.

Ordinarily, Bapu does not take such things seriously. But today he was gravely expressing his

heartfelt anxiety about me. I realised that after every two days either there was a rise in my temperature or I suffered from cold or something else. When Bapu cannot think of anything else, he takes my weight on the weighing machine which is kept in the dressing-room. I do not understand why my weight goes down every time, or sometimes remains constant. It never increases even by one ounce. That is why he is all the more anxious. Every day I am in ill health. I myself do not take my fever, cold, etc. very seriously. Why should my condition cause Bapu unnecessary worry? Patting me a lot, Bapu at last said in moving tones, "You are silly. If I do not water the seedlings, I shall be guilty of a serious crime. It is no use saying anything more to you, because I ought to take more care of you instead of instructing you. I am responsible for your ill health." Tears flowed from my eyes in torrents. How wonderful Bapu's love for me was!

At lunch time he looked into my notes for a while and signed them. Then he asked me to read the letters that had come from my home. He inquired about the affairs of my family after a long time.

Shri Ayyangar came to see him. Bapu pleaded, "We must settle our dispute among ourselves. But my line of action is different from yours. I say so, lest we should fail to follow either of the two lines. You may carry on the administration either according to your own plan or in the light of perfect truth and non-violence. A middle course will be of no avail."

After he had left, Madhav Rao Aney Saheb came.

Among the Muslims of Daryaganj Abdul Ghani Saheb and Maulana Habib-ul-Rahman Saheb are prominent. As usual, they complained of the atrocities committed on the Muslims. Bapu is feeling very uneasy. Dr Surya Kant and Shanno Devi also came. A conference was held to deliberate upon the abduction of our women. Mridulaben and Rameshwariben had attended that conference. They brought alarming tales of woe from there. They tried hard to bring back the abducted women even at the risk of their lives. Hindu women fear that they may not be readmitted to society now. They think it better to stay where they are. The whole position has to be explained to them at length. The visitors said, "Everybody will welcome it if Bapu said something in his today's talk about the duty of the people towards these women. Sethi Saheb with whom we had been staying in Srinagar has left Kashmir. A great scarcity of food-stuffs and other necessities is felt there." They related many harrowing tales of distress.

Bapu is going through his daily routine of spinning, mud-plastering, meals, etc. He received many letters at today's prayer-meeting, but, being unable to get more time for a radio broadcast, he had to close his talk within 15 minutes.

A displaced person wrote to him, "I will go on with my fast until the Muslims are driven away from here." Bapu replied to him, "Your fast is an absolute sin. If someone is bent upon committing a sin, who can stop him? I believe that I know more about fasts than anybody else. The reason is that it was I who discovered this weapon. Therefore,

one should consider well before going on a fast publicly.

“It has been also reported that students get their own way by going on a strike. Such strikes are quite wrong. Again, I am an expert in this subject. Nay, I have myself organized strikes many a time. Every strike or fast is not right.

“Many refugees came to me during the day. With a heavy heart they related the tortures they had to suffer. They also complained that I was unmindful of their lot. But this is not true. I am staying here to watch over their welfare. Otherwise, what is my object in staying here ? I know my own feelings, or it is God who knows them ! Who listens to me today ?

An inefficient government must go

There was a time when people immediately carried out whatever escaped from my lips. Truly, I was then the commander of a non-violent army. But today mine is a cry in the wilderness. You are free to bring your complaints to me. You have a right to demand facilities for food and lodging. But at the same time you should carry out quite faithfully whatever work is entrusted to you. Those who run the government today are my friends. But this does not mean that they must carry out whatever I bid them. Why should they ? They may listen to me as a friend. But it is their outlook whether to act or not upon my advice. I'm not God. Likewise, what I say is not dictated by conceit. But if my words are even partially heeded, we may not have to suffer this misery. It may be that I am mistaken in my judgement.

“Today Hindus and Sikhs cannot live peacefully in Karachi and Sind. Before they left Sind, they assembled in their Gurdwara.¹ There they were attacked. The Government of that country says, ‘We are helpless. We are unable to exercise our power. We are unable to stop what has happened or what is happening.’ How can any government act in this way ? I am suggesting to both the governments that they had better admit their total failure. If you have no power to control anything, you had better go out of office and let the people indulge in pillage. Before letting the people die in this way, a government should put an end to itself.”

What Bapu said with regard to government at today’s prayer-meeting had a great effect on the people. After the prayer he went out for a walk and Rameshwariben joined him. Mridulaben also came. She said that there had been more bloodshed and destruction in Sind than in the Punjab.

After Bapu had checked the written version of his talk, Panditji came. He conferred with Bapu *in camera* for 35 minutes. When Panditji comes, he comes with a long face ; and when he leaves, he departs with an equally cheerful face and a lighter burden. But when Panditji goes away Bapu is lost in thought to the same extent. That is because he has to solve all day long many diverse problems of the people—has to listen to the painful stories of killings—while at night he has to listen to Panditji’s more serious and more grievous problems and find a solution to them. The common man has to bear hardships because of the actions of big

¹ A Sikh shrine.

people. The workings of the minds of those who
suffer on the government are indeed terrible. But
Bapu takes upon himself Panditji's burden even
as a father takes upon himself the responsibility of
his son's undesirable conduct. In fact, at night,
Bapu seems to be a curious mixture of patience
and courage and is engaged in clearing his own
path.

Birla Bhawan, New Delhi
8-1-'48

Prayer as usual. Kaka Saheb has been staying here since yesterday, and so he attended today's prayer. After the prayer Kaka Saheb sat in Bapu's room. Bapu asked him, "Do you want some time for a talk?" Kaka Saheb replied, "Yes, if it were possible, otherwise not."

Bapu said, "If you say so, you may not get an opportunity to have a talk. These days the pressure of work is heavier upon me than it was ever before. When I think of it, I feel that it is a very eritical time for me. Why don't I go mad when I see all this work? I wonder how God is sustaining me. Such is my predicament."

What Bapu says is perfectly true. A large number of people come to visit him and his mail is accumulating. And besides this, he is not keeping well.

While talking to Kaka Saheb, Bapu reclined in his bed for a short time. He fell into a nap for nearly ten minutes. Then it was time to go for a walk, and so he had a drink of hot water mixed with honey and got up for his walk. I put by his side those letters to which he wanted to reply in his own hand.

Time for rest is drawing near

Kaka Saheb accompanied Bapu on his walk. He referred to the riot at Bahawalpur. Something new is

happening every day. We do not receive news of peace from any quarter. Bapu is deeply worried now. I got ready to give him the massage. During massage, when Bapu finished his Benglee lessons, I said, "It would be better if you take rest today. Why are you reading?" Bapu replied, "Now it appears to me also that the time for rest is drawing near. Then, I won't wake up from sleep even if you give me a vigorous shake. Look at the pile of letters. Moreover, news of violent disturbances is pouring in day after day. In regard to it, you and I must consider how we are going to be tested. Are we awake and alert or are we sleeping over these things in this Birla House? Think over this carefully."

I did not say a word but quietly finished my work. It was his day for a shave in the bath. He does not get time to write letters, so he held the razor in his hand, asked me to fetch paper and a pen and dictated to me two letters while shaving himself. He dictated, "Kaka Saheb has been staying here for two days. With great difficulty I could find time to talk to him about India and other things. Had he not pressed me for a talk, it is doubtful if he could have ever got time to talk even if he had waited for weeks. Hundreds of men and women come to visit me all day, and correspondence is piling up. I do not find time at all, let alone the editing of the *Harijan*. Dear Manu shaves me, but today I have taken over that work from her. Confined in the bath, I am applying the razor to my chin and dictating this letter to Manu lest I should forget it.

"I am not keeping as good health as I would like

to. That is due to my neglect in repeating Rama's name, I suppose. I think . . . should go to Rajkot. If he stays here or I allow him to stay here, he deceives himself as well as others. Man is his own enemy. Nobody can be an enemy to another. Likewise, nobody can wrong another.

"Give up the desire to stay in the Ashram. Very few people are now left in the Ashram, and I have to tell them that only those should stay on who can stand on their own legs.

"I am glad that the controls have been lifted. I had no fear on that account. It was the Government which feared that the interests of some people might suffer thereby. But can a government function in this way ?

"At present my mind is unsettled. Here the fire of hatred is suppressed at present, but there is no knowing when it will burst into a flame."

" . . . I had your letter which was written in English. First of all I apologise to you for this belated reply. I have not a minute to spare. This moment I am reclining in a tub and shaving myself. Usually, Manu shaves me, but today I am shaving with my own hands and at the same time dictating this letter to Manu. This is how I am carrying on nowadays !

"The situation at Bahawalpur has deteriorated a good deal. Who can improve what is beyond redemption ? I am greatly disturbed. Panditji comes to see me once a day. I shall talk the matter over with him. It's no use going there. If I can do something here, it will have its effect all over India. Nothing can be achieved by knocking about

from place to place. I am bent upon doing or dying ! If I could die bravely, it would do a lot of good. Let me see what God ordains me to do. We are all in the hands of God. Do not come here, leaving the people there to their fate. Even if you die there bravely, Bahawalpur will be all the better for it."

Time to do or die

The bath took an unusually long time and Suchetaben Kripalani and others had been waiting outside, so Bapu did not dictate much. Kikiben narrated the condition of Sind. Bapu said, "I have had many reports about Sind, but I never heard that any Congress leader was killed there. I have listened to your report, but I would rather hear that Kikiben was assaulted and killed while saving the honour of women. The day we are able to exhibit such bravery, peace will come of itself. This is not the time for deliberating, advising or reporting ; it is time to do or die."

Local Muslim friends came as on other days. In the afternoon Bapu spun and attended to his mail. Rukminiben Yerulkar paid a visit.

Sardar Dada also came in the afternoon. Today Bapu is feeling relieved of his cold. Discussing the present situation, Bapu said to him in fun, "You are destined to live 100 years, and you shall live that long." Sardar blurted out, "I bet that, if you live to be 125, I shall live to be 100, otherwise not !"

Pattani Saheb also came to see Bapu, Thakkar Bapa and Hariji came only to meet him. The refugees from Mirpur narrated their sad plight to

Bapu in tearful accents. For a time the listeners were thoroughly shaken by their tale.

Panditji came on a short visit. He will come again at night with Sheikh Saheb. He came especially to inquire after Bapu's health.

Liquor, strikes and Satyagrah¹

At today's prayer-meeting Bapu said, "A friend complains that I have not replied to a letter he sent me yesterday at 3.30 p.m. I receive countless letters. Many a time I get letters written in a language I do not know. Hence I can dispose of them only when someone conversant with that language explains the contents to me. But if it is something very important, you can tell me face to face.

"Another question put to me is this : 'You ask Harijans to give up drinking ; why don't you tell others to do the same. Are the rich and the educated not to give it up ?' This question is beside the point. If a person commits a sin, should others follow him ? Those who are educated or are in military service do not stand in need of exhortation. Poor people and labourers come back home after the day's strenuous labour. They do not get any mental or physical recreation at their work. That is why they take to drinking, but this is not the case with well-to-do classes. I do not recognize the existence of the army. Hence the question of drinking by the soldiers in the army does not arise. There are, however, a good many Englishmen and Indians who never touch wine.

¹ Passive resistance ; literally, force of truth.

“Another letter states that in students’ strikes only those students take part who have communist, not Congressite, leanings. After all communists or socialists also aim at serving the country. On this score they can arrive at an understanding between them. But so long as students are engaged in study, they must constitute one class, a class which aims at acquiring knowledge. Before India became independent, I took part in and organised strikes. But there is no reason to suppose that all strikes are non-violent and based on truth. It must be clearly understood that today, when the country is passing through critical times and is in need of true students, indulgence in strikes will only aggravate our misery.

“Another friend writes : ‘Why don’t you go to Pakistan to face the terrible conditions prevailing there? Why do you not go there and offer *satyagrah* against atrocities?’ How can I look the people there in the face? When we are enacting Pakistan here, what shall I say to the people there? If peace were established in India, I would start for Pakistan today and at this very moment. Here in this capital city Hindus and Sikhs seem to have lost their senses and want to drive away the Muslims from here. If we do so, we shall commit a very shameful act. Again, when Hindus and Sikhs do not want to stay in Pakistan, who is to offer *satyagrah* and on whose behalf? Today *satyagrah* and non-violence have ceased to exist. Everybody looks to the army for protection. We have enshrined the army in place of God. I still affirm that if I could have my way, the whole aspect of the country

would change. *Satyagrah* is fruitful in all circumstances and on all occasions. But there must be those who can offer it.

“Today some people came to me from Kashmir, Mirpur and Bahawalpur. They were all extremely miserable and distressed, yet they talked in a sensible manner. Panditji also talked to them and assured them of doing his best. Actual fighting may not have begun there, but a kind of war, a cold war, is going on there. Under these circumstances it is difficult to extricate the people from those areas. We haven’t enough vehicles either.

“In Bahawalpur also horrible atrocities are being committed. I am trying to do as much as one man can do by himself.

“These people also complain that when somebody comes from another province he can get employment; but, if a man migrates from an Indian state to one of the provinces, he cannot get employment there. I asked Sardar about it, and he said that such distinctions were impossible. Yet if anybody has been subjected to such injustice, he can report the matter to the authorities.”

Bapu had a walk after the prayer. At night Dr Kitchlu and Sheikh Saheb came. They discussed the affairs of Kashmir. Today we went out for a stroll and came to the house of Sardar Dada. Seeing us, he inquired about us. We replied, “Time was hanging heavy on us, so we came out of Birla Bhawan to take a stroll.” Sardar and Maniben were both working together in the office. Hearing our reply, Maniben said, “Bring out the basket of toys for these girls to play with.”

Maniben entertained us with great love to sweets made of roasted rice and pickle which had come from Bengal. When we came back, it was high time for Bapu to go to bed. But he was so tired that he fell asleep between 7 and 7.30 early in the evening. When he got up, he looked over the written version of his talk.

Bapu is very sad these days. His diet consists of the following things. Early morning after prayer, hot water with honey. At 5.30, two spoonfuls of honey and hot water. At 9.30, on alternate days, 3 light *chapatis*¹, uncooked vegetables, 16 ounces of milk, 2 oranges, 1 apple ; and on the other days 3 bananas and 16 ounces of milk—milk and bananas separately and no wheat on these days—with an orange or some other fruit. At 12.30 after rest, hot water and two spoonfuls of honey and a little soda. At 3.30, after applying the mud-plaster, hot water and honey—one glass of hot water and two spoonfuls of honey every time. At 4, cooked vegetables, a little of orange or some other juicy fruit and 16 ounces of milk. After prayer at 7, hot water and honey.

At night Bapu lay down in his bed after washing his feet and taking some exercise, as usual. He said, "So many visitors came all day that I feel tired now. The Kashmir problem does not seem to be easy of solution. It is rumoured that Sheikh Saheb's brother-in-law has grabbed everything and gone away to Indore. Let us see how things turn out." Bapu seems to be absorbed in deep thought. He does not look as cheerful as before, though he passes witty remarks and goes through his work as usual.

¹ Unleavened bread rolled flat, thin and round.

Among the daily visitors there are usually three or four foreigners. In a humble way Bapu tells them also that the disturbances taking place today are a matter of great shame to us.

We received a letter from Narayan Kaka about a marriage that took place among our relatives.

Bapu does not feel interested when such things take place in these horrible times. He replied : "Reccived the news about dear . . . with surprise and sorrow ! Whatever happens, I have to look after him. When all things are going on as usual, why should Navin be made an exception ? I am not at all interested in this marriage. What made you write this to me ? How can I give my blessings ?

Blessings from Bapu."

This letter was posted on the 9th.

Only Heartfelt Friendship can save us 10

Birla Bhawan, New Delhi
9-1-'48

Bapu woke up today 10 minutes before prayer time. He asked me to make some alterations in the letter to He said, "I must communicate my views to Kanu and Narayandas. A votary of non-violence and truth need not fear anyone nor conceal anything. I believe in the Sanskrit couplet which says : 'Anger is conquered by love and evil is conquered by goodness.' One who accepts the truth of this couplet and has faith in it cannot write or say anything more. Anything short of this ideal will be ineffective. This is not the time to worry about what others might say. Our work is a great sacrifice which calls for perfect and all round purity. It is absolutely certain that braggarts will come a cropper one by one. If many like me perish, the yard-stick of truth or non-violence will not shrink by an inch. I am myself fallible. I am no egotist to say that I have not made or will not make mistakes ; but if the mistakes are not made consciously, they are always pardonable.

Only heartfelt friendship will save us

In a way, this capital city is a prison-house today. The capital of India, despite its being independent, is being defended by the police and the army. In the midst of it I am sitting and watching.

Even the votaries of non-violence have to depend upon weapons that cause violence. What a trial it is for me ! What a deep mystery there is in the will of God ! But I have to do or die. Those who believe that arms can save the people of Delhi are sadly mistaken. The only thing which can save Delhi, nay the whole world, is heartfelt friendship.

I have no time. The pressure of correspondence is weighing heavy on my hands. This much for today."

Some of Bapu's letters read like poetry. This was written on a post-card, not in a letter. And this post-card contains words which are well suited for a thesis on non-violence and are full of profound wisdom.

During today's walk no particular topic was discussed. We talked of the present situation only. Bapu said, "Because of our sins (the decisions made by the leaders of the country) thousands of poor, innocent villagers have to bear hardships, whereas we enjoy all kinds of comforts in palacial buildings. We people never miss parties and festivities in season and out of season. Therefore, these miserable people cannot experience the benefits of *swarajya*.¹ When a death occurs in a home, the whole family observes the customary period of mourning. Thereby the bereaved person is made to feel that others sympathise with him or her. Similarly, if we had made some sacrifices in sympathy with the miserable people, they would have felt some consolation despite their misfortunes. But we indulge in tall talk and speeches to express our sympathy for

¹ Self-government or independence.

them, while our actions are devoid of any fellow-feeling.

Introspection

I myself think it wrong to live in this palatial building. I have no right to use even an inch of land in excess of what I need. If every leader and the owner of every bungalow acts thoughtfully in this way, we can feel a sense of dignity in spite of the miserable state of our country. Poor, innocent refugees who are passing their time in the open without any shelter in this bitter cold and are stricken with grief at the misery and suffering of their children and women folk will derive some consolation thereby. But where and to whom shall I say this? Nobody has time to listen to me. I would not be far wrong if I say that nobody has time for such things except me."

Bapu alone can understand the agony of his mind. He alone can bear it. Another man in his position would have died of heart failure. He is sorely distressed at the situation prevailing in Delhi, Bahawalpur, Sind and the Punjab. He often says, "I am responsible for all this. I have made a mistake somewhere in weighing the pros and cons of non-violence and truth and acting accordingly. The mistake cannot but have its effect. I know that it is the non-violence of the brave and the truth of the brave. Perhaps God deliberately made me blind to them at that time." It is well that I have awakened to my mistake at the fag end of my life and can see it now. I pray to God that I may die bravely. If I am able to do so, it will be my victory."

During massage Bapu went through the papers and learnt Bengalee. When taking a bath, he referred to Turkish bath, saying, "This bath is taken first in luke-warm, then in warm and finally in unbearably hot water. The fee for it is certainly high but at the same time it is very beneficial."

Sardar Dada came only to see Bapu. The cabinet for Bhavnagar has been almost finalized. It will meet today, and then everything will be settled.

Jiwanji Bhai said, "The Urdu edition of the *Harijan* is not much in demand and therefore it is being run at a loss." Bapu is going to write about it in the *Harijan*. People from Bahawalpur also came. They wish that someone should be deputed by Bapu to study the conditions there at first hand. Panditji, Macdonald and others came just to see Bapu.

Anxiety about Bhavnagar

The delegation that came from Gohilwad district included Manubhai Pancholi, Balwantbhai, Mohanbhai and Motichand Garadawala and others. There was a proposal that Nanabhai Bhatt be made Chief Minister when responsible government was inaugurated. Bapu said, "I wish that Nanabhai should be appointed Adviser like Vashistha Muni who was Adviser in Ramarajya.¹ He will fill this post more worthily than that of the Chief Minister. In case of a conflict between the people and the government he will act as liaison officer. He should establish his headquarters in Amla village, not in the town. I think Nanabhai will not refuse it. He will not

¹ The rule of Rama under which people enjoyed perfect bliss and prosperity.

prove equally worthy of an administrative post. He can only occupy the post of an educational officer. If everybody were to become a minister, who would be the subjects ?

A minister must be educated, so must be the subjects. If the people are educated, they will keep the Ministers on tenter-hooks. Only educated people can show the road to a country's prosperity. I would personally prefer that Balwant Rai be appointed Chief Minister. He has been doing valuable service to Bhavnagar for years. Besides, Nanabhai is not as capable of holding the post of Prime Minister as Balwant Rai is, and Balwant Rai does not possess the capabilities which Nanabhai has. Dhebar cannot carry on the administration of Kathiawad by himself. If both of them hold charge of Kathiawad, I shall have no anxiety. At this juncture there is no sense in putting the burden of administration for the whole of Kathiawad on the shoulders of Dhebar."

Keeping in mind another important matter, Bapu said, "It is my personal advice that due homage must be paid to Pattani at this function. But if you invite him merely to censure him, it would be better not to invite him at all. Any preconceived notions will pull you down for ever. You have to learn a good deal from him. On many occasions his experience will prove useful in making the country prosperous. But my advice is unsolicited. You may reject it entirely if it is unpalatable. Do not think that you must carry it out, merely because it is Bapu's suggestion or Bapu will be pleased thereby. If you do anything to flatter me,

both the flatterer and I will be guilty of putting back the hands of the clock."

Today refugees came in large numbers. Many of them, who have established contact with Muslims of this place, proposed that they should make over their own houses in Pakistan to the Muslims who had migrated there and get in exchange the houses which they had left in India. On this understanding they exchanged houses privately. But the Government is forcing them to vacate the houses occupied by them to accommodate foreign ambassadors. Bapu does not like this. The Government, the people and the leaders commit so many mistakes one after another that a new difficulty crops up on the heels of an old one which has been removed.

In today's talk Bapu said, "There was a temple in Bahawalpur and it still exists. But it has been taken away from the possession of Hindus. The head of the temple came to me ; he was able to escape from a very dangerous situation. He was able to save some women but all could not be rescued. Some provision must be made for those who have come here and are in a helpless condition. I am doing as much as a single person can do. I cannot do more, because any government cannot interfere with the affairs of another government. I can give no guarantee. I say it is foolishness to put one's trust in anyone except God.

Some men and women came to me today. Government has notified them to vacate their house because it was required for foreign ambassadors. I cannot say how far this is true. Those people contend that they have acquired the house by exchange with the

Muslims who have migrated to Pakistan. But they cannot furnish any proof. Under these circumstances I can only say this much that no government has the right to order the occupant of any house to vacate it and to go and live on the street or anywhere he pleases. Houses can be requisitioned for foreign ambassadors but only after giving satisfaction to the occupants. But I am not a government official. Who listens to me? I pointed out to those people that they had no documentary proof of their occupancy. Maybe the Government regards them as intruders. Be that as it may, the Government cannot get a house vacated without providing alternative accommodation.

“One friend pointed out to me that since I was living in Birla House, poor people could not approach me, and he suggested that I might stay in the Harijan Colony instead of Birla House.”

Bapu: “When I came to Delhi, fighting was going on apace and the Harijan Colony was overful with refugees. That is why I am putting up here. I have no attraction for occupying this palace. But I would not like to get the Harijan Colony vacated if it is being used for the welfare of the refugees. Whoever pleases may come here. While staying here, I try to comfort and help as many people as I can.”

Everything else went on as usual. After prayer Shriman Narayan joined Bapu on his walk. Later, Arthur, Captain of the British Air Force, came. Bapu carefully listened to him when he described how an aeroplane was built and what distance it covered in a specified period of time. Sallies of wit and humour also went round. During the

conversation, Bapu put in, "No course is open to me now except to go up. I must do or die. . . . Aye, I often see by night green and red lights of a plane, which appear to me like stars in the sky. In the face of such wonderful inventions the mind of man is so affected with insanity and indulges in such senseless, terrible murders that I am shocked to think of it. What havoc is wrought by the tiny brain of man !"

Bapu was so profoundly interested in the talk that I could not help asking, "Bapu, are you going to learn piloting an aircraft at this age?" Bapu said, "Oh yes, every day I indulge in gossip which is no less than an aerial bomb." . . . Bapu listened to minute details with such close attention that the Captain was equally delighted.

Panditji came a second time, accompanied by Henderson. While they were sitting, Rameshwariben Nehru came. So Bapu was rather late in writing out his talk. Then he sipped hot water, took exercise and got ready at 9:30 to go to bed. I myself massage his head with oil every day. So at that time Bapu inquires after everyone. Referring to Kathiawad, he said to me :

"I think Balwant Rai is better qualified to be Prime Minister. Even so, if Anant Rai comes tomorrow, you ascertain his wishes. We must know the wishes of the ruler, the people and the rest. If some information is withheld from me, you may be in a position to get it. Nothing should be done which might hurt anyone, particularly the Maharaja and Anant Rai. I place this responsibility upon you. . . ."

While keeping an eye on the whole of India, Bapu is extremely anxious to see that not the least injustice is done to the small prinieipality of Bhavnagar. It oeeurs to me every day that Bapu is no ordinary mortal and God has blessed him with a wonderful brain.

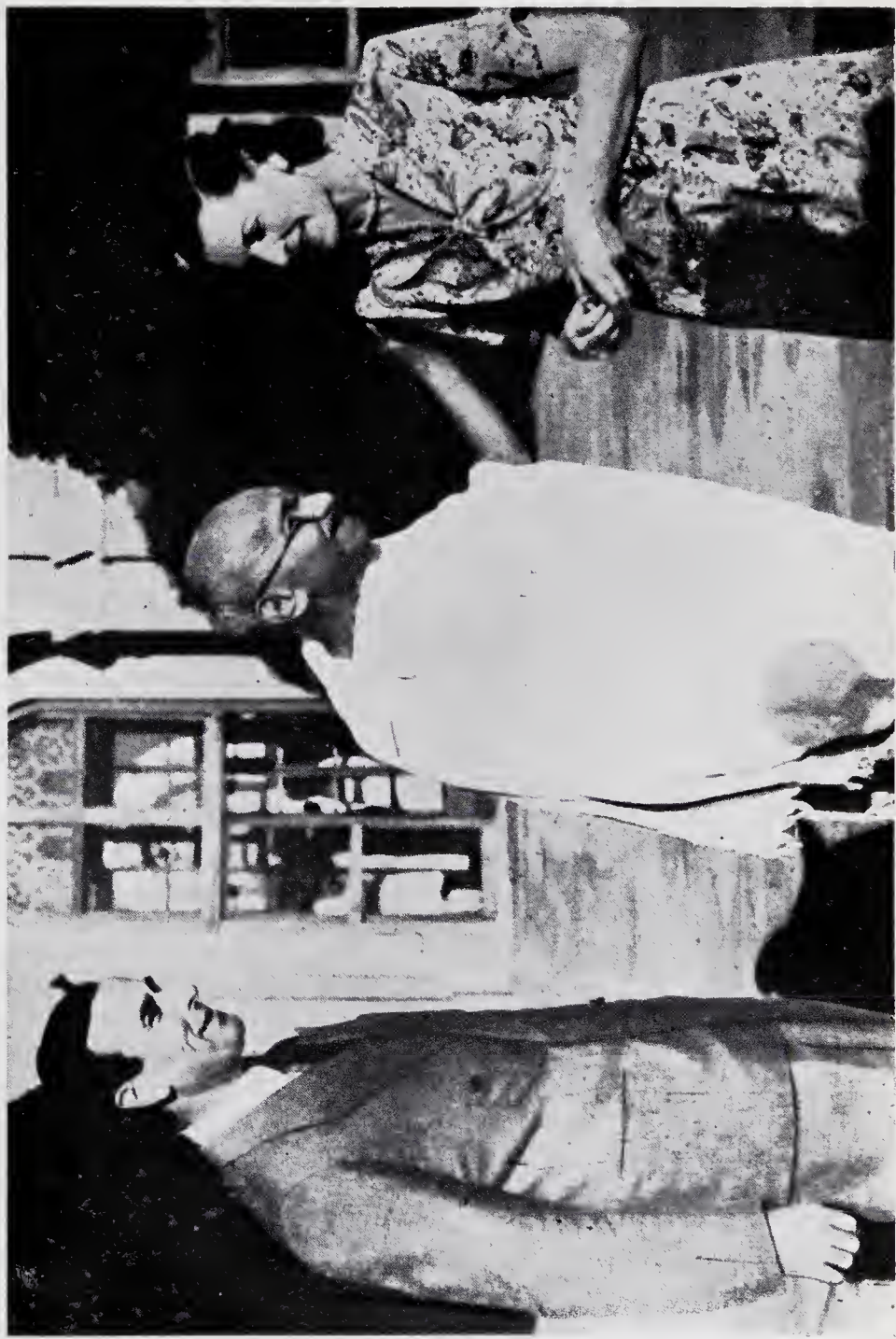
Birla Bhawan, New Delhi
10-1-'48

Prayer as usual. Then I looked into Bapu's file of letters. I tore up all useless papers and preserved those which seemed serviceable. I replied to all letters which contained stamps for return post and read out the replies to Bapu.

Anxiety about correspondence

I wrote about six replies on behalf of Bapu. Each letter contained a different complaint. In some letters there were complaints of Hindus against Muslims ; in others the complaints were the other way about. I acknowledged them, saying, "Revered Gandhiji is awefully busy these days and he is staying on here to alleviate the sufferings of all of you. He is determined to do or die. You will know more if you listen on the radio to his discourses at the prayer-meetings or read them in newspapers. Think over them and you will receive the necessary guidance."

Bapu was pleased to read this. Ever since I came to stay with Bapu, I have often sent this reply. But this is an important business, and if I do not keep Bapu informed about the contents of the letters addressed to him, he is displeased. Once I had to listen to his reproof in this connection : "With what a great expectation the senders of these letters write to me ! Even if I am not able



Chatting with Lord and Lady Mountbatten.

to reply to their letters, none of you has the right to keep me in the dark about the letters people send me out of kindness. There are people who are kind to me. If they feel the need, they are kind enough to write to me, otherwise there is no correspondence." Therefore, I have to keep him informed about all the letters that are received.

Bapu had a short nap. Nobody accompanied him on his walk today except us, the members of his household. Very often Bapu appears extremely grave. He laughs and amuses himself in our company and does other things. But it seems to me that he is bored with the situation in Delhi and is feeling ill at ease. He is trying to find a way out. Be that as it may, Bapu's outlook seems to have changed. Perhaps he is thinking of going to Rajkot. So he said, "I am so sick of these conditions that I do not want to witness them any more. I do not know when and what new step I shall take."

The value of one's word

While in his bath, Bapu felt slightly giddy. Of course, Bapu is extremely weary. He says : "Work does not tire me. But people say one thing at one time and another at another time. They do not stick to one decision. In order to please me they say to my face things which are to my liking, and when they go out of this Birla Bhawan they make plans as to how they should behave towards different people, so that they might rise to prominence. The disagreement between . . . is becoming more acute day by day. No one is amenable to reason. When conceding Pakistan, we pledged our word to pay 55

crores of rupees. Differences of opinion have arisen on this point. If we go back on our promise, our honour will be at stake. One who does not keep one's word is good-for-nothing."

Bapu mentioned these things to me in the bath. Therefore, I may be right in my guess that Bapu is immersed in serious thought on account of these mental worries or because of his pent-up feelings of grief.

The local Muslim friends came and they brought their complaints as on other days. Bapu said, "You will not have to wait as long now as you have already waited. While you have kept patience for so many months, you may as well wait patiently for a week more and see what happens."

Bapu had a talk with Pattani Saheb about the privy purse and enquired about the Maharaja's property and other things. On his part the Maharaja has decided to accept what precious little Bapu will offer him.

Bapu advised Gadgil Saheb not to evict the refugees who had come from a nearby house the other day. Gadgil Saheb said, "We have to accommodate our guests."

Bapu retorted in anger, "Then, first serve a notice of eviction on me and take possession of Birla House. Likewise, if ministers like you are in occupation of big bungalows, they should keep for their use only a few rooms and vacate the remaining parts, of which Government should take possession. Why should you evict the refugees who are already settled? I spoke about it to Jawahar also. He at once understood that I was right. Jawahar has

this great virtue ; he admits his mistake in a remarkable way.”

Gadgil Sahab also agreed not to evict the refugees occupying the adjoining bungalow and promised that he would make other arrangements for state guests.

In fact, everyone stands in awe of Bapu. Nobody can play him false. The Chief Commissioner of Delhi also came. In the course of his conversation with him Bapu said, “Either you let me leave Delhi or God will ; only then I can have rest.”

The atmosphere in Delhi is vitiated a good deal. Raj Kumariben gave a report of her talk with. . . . Colonel Dr Bhargava who performed a surgical operation on me came to invite us to dinner. Bapu gave us permission to go. But since I have been getting fever off and on, Bapu asked him to examine me again the next day before entertaining me to dinner. I said, “Bapu, what a travesty of facts ! A doctor charges a fee for examining a patient, but instead of paying him his fee you are sending me to dine at his house.” Bapu said, “The leave I give you to go to dinner is his fee.” In this way we cracked jests for some time.

Relations with Iran and Pakistan

The Ambassador of Iran came to see Bapu. He said, “The relations between Iran and India have been cordial. Yet in this country Indians harass Iranians, looking upon them as enemies just because they are Muslims. We have, however, no complaint against the Government of Bombay or the Government of India. On our part, we are, and will continue to be, fully alive to our duty of protecting the Indians domiciled in Iran. But if in this country

Indians trouble the Iranians, it is possible that in Iran the Iranians may not let the Indians live in peace. . . .”

Bapu said, “I consider Iran, Afghanistan, China, Japan, India and Pakistan as constituting one unit or a single Asian continent. If the whole Asian continent becomes strong and the countries constituting it, instead of mistrusting one another, live and function as friends, paradise will truly descend on earth. This Aryan continent standing on love, truth and non-violence will become the fountain-head of happiness and peace for the whole world. The Government of this country is alive to the situation, but it is natural that Iranians should live in fear. In these circumstances, the more affectionately you treat the Indians living in Afghanistan, the more its effect will be felt in India. Therefore, you can give protection to the Iranians in India from your own country.”

Today’s talk had hardly begun when a man who looked like a *sadhu* (ascetic) began shouting. When he was made quiet and questioned, he said, “I want to read out my letter to Bapu here and now.”

Bapu said, “We can see from this how low we have fallen. This man claims to be a *sadhu* and recites the Gita and the Gayatri,¹ yet he hasn’t sense enough to behave decently.” It was with great difficulty that he was persuaded to keep quiet.

After that, referring to Bahawalpur, Bapu said, “It has been reported to me that some men who have come from Bahawalpur wanted to create confusion by throwing stones and breaking up the

¹ A Vedic hymn regarded as most sacred.

prayer-meeting. But I intervened and they were dissuaded from their purpose. All of you should follow their example. I am a witness to the sufferings they have undergone. The Nawab has given an assurance that all the Hindus and Sikhs living there will be sent here in safety. You must have faith in his words. The Nawab has also promised that he will take meticulous care to see that the people of Bahawalpur are put to no further trouble. Likewise, our Government is not oblivious of their welfare.

“But these symptoms are bad enough. Our country was one whole and it was partitioned into two. Besides this, both the countries turned hostile to each other and became enemies in their homeland. The condition of Sind is even more alarming. The situation there is becoming so dangerous that it is difficult to forecast how India will react to it. It cannot be improved by a show of anger. At this time the best thing is to consider coolly how the situation can be brought under control and to act accordingly.

“The Iranian Ambassador came to see me. He told me that the Iranians living in Bombay—most of them being hotel-keepers—were in trouble. It is a fact that Iranian tea is very popular there. But some internal quarrel started there ; it went from bad to worse and many Iranians were killed. Even then they spoke highly of the co-operation of the Governments of Bombay and Delhi. In a way both Iranians and Indians are Aryans. You will come across many Sanskrit words in Zendavasta. The two countries have ancient and cordial relations. If

these relations are allowed to deteriorate, it will be shameful for all.

“People thank me for the lifting of controls. But I am no omniscient being to foretell whether this will prove beneficial or harmful. I have no divine vision either. The eyes, ears, feet, etc. that I possess are like those of other people. Therefore, you have to determine your own future. What I say or what scores of so-called *mahatmas*¹ like me declare is not necessarily true, and I say that you need not take them at their word. All must learn to think for themselves. Then they will be happy.”

Bapu was very tired on his walk. He has a particular anxiety or load on his mind. As usual, he got ready to go to bed at 10 o'clock after taking some exercise. He read the discourse given at the prayer-meeting and talked with Panditji. He set apart writing materials for his morning work.

¹ Saints or supermen.

Birla Bhawan, New Delhi
11-1-'48

Corruption in the Congress

Prayer as usual. Before prayer Bapu said, "We are morally degraded to such an extent—which I did not know till now—that our *satyagrah* and all our struggles were based on weakness. If the prominent members of the Congress do not remain steady and resolute, this organization will go to the wall. It is far better to dissolve it. The objective of this organization was narrowed down to the winning of freedom. Today I have come to know that the organization is falling on evil days. The Secretary and the office-bearers are showing indifference to work. The letter I received from Andhra yesterday has given me a headache. The sons of men like . . ., who live at the centre and command all sorts of resources, are vying with one another in the race for making money. What does all this point to? If we are so degraded, it would be no exaggeration to say that we are only fit to be slaves. Men like . . . who consciously and willingly gave up their business in a busy and progressive city like Bombay are now unscrupulously making money right and left on the strength of their membership of the Congress and the adoption of khadi dress. Where will this all lead to? I am stunned to learn all this. Now if God in his wisdom saves my honour, as He rescued

the elephant from the crocodile in the legend, I shall be extremely grateful to Him.”

Having been terribly upset by such incidents, Bapu said all this to me in an extremely sad tone in the small hours of the morning. I had known since yesterday that Bapu was absorbed in some deep thought but I could not guess the reason. In spite of his gravity his sallies of wit, conversation with visitors, and other activities, such as regular meals, etc., went on as usual, so that the visitors could not get an inkling of his worry. Yet even a little gravity in Bapu's nature makes itself felt in this room. Even if we suppose that these reports about . . ., who is a prominent resident of Bombay, are false, it may still be asked why such stories gain currency at all. This story, which has some truth in it, may prove a precursor to many fictitious and incredible stories. That is why Bapu is afflicted with heart-breaking agony.

Compost and the training of the peasant

After prayer Harilalbhai of Gram-dakshina-murti, who came from Bhavnagar, put forward certain suggestions to increase the produce from land. Bapu dictated the following note to be appended to these suggestions in the *Harijan* :

“There is nothing new in Harilal's suggestions. Yet, since those who hold the reins of government are not peasants, these suggestions can be useful. If we snatch some leisure from political work and devote that time to constructive work and give due importance to agricultural improvement, we can teach a lot to peasants and at the same time learn a good deal from them.

“If we treat a field with compost, it need not be left fallow for a long time. The manure preserves its fertility. It is not necessary to carry compost from one site to another. With a little experience this manure can be made easily in every village. But this cannot be done mechanically. If we gather useful information from every article and make our own experiments, we can give really useful training to crores of peasants.”

The late Totaramji

Bapu dictated the following note on the death of Totaramji. “Aged Totaramji passed away without requiring the services of anybody to nurse him. He was an ornament to Sabarmati Ashram. He was not learned but certainly wise. He had an inexhaustible repertory of devotional songs but he was not a master of music. He kept the inmates of the Ashram spellbound by singing on his one-stringed instrument. His wife too was like him. She survives her husband.

“Wherever people live in colonies, all kinds of quarrels do arise. I do not remember a single occasion when this couple took part in any quarrel or started one. Totaramji had a deep love for land. Cultivation was a part and parcel of his life. He joined the Ashram a good many years before his death and never left it. Young and old, men and women, were always eager to seek his guidance. They received from him infallible satisfaction.

“He was a staunch Hindu, but he was equally tolerant towards Hindus, Muslims and people embracing other faiths. There was no trace of the

feeling of untouchability in him, nor was he given to any vice. He never took part in politics. Yet his patriotism was so admirable that it could stand comparison with that of anybody. The spirit of sacrifice was natural to him, nay, it was itself blessed by him.

“He went to the Fiji Islands as an indentured labourer. It was Deshbandhu Andrews who sought him out. Banarsi Das Chaturvedi deserves the credit of bringing him to the Ashram. Whatever service could be rendered to him in his last hour was performed by the wife of Ghulam Rasul Qureshi and the sister of Imam Saheb. A Sanskrit proverb says : Benevolence is the glory of saints. This was literally true of Totaramji.”

Bapu had a nap for ten minutes. I too fell asleep. I woke at 6.30, had light refreshments and went for a walk with Bapu. Sarla accompanied us. At 7.45 I washed Bapu's feet and got ready for the massage. We talked about the dissatisfaction which Sarla and the members of her family are feeling at the betrothal of Dhirenbhai and Indira (grand-daughter of Dr Pranjivan Mehta of Rangoon), and also about other things. Bapu pays close attention to all the affairs of all people. In the morning he was much distressed at the corruption prevailing in the Congress, but a few hours after that he took a lot of interest in the betrothal of the grand-daughter of one of his old friends.

Referring to a third topic, Bapu said to me in the bath, “Why don't you speak ? I know everything about . . . I dislike seeing you unhappy. If I see even a slight gravity on your face, I do not

like it. If you look upon me as your parent, you must tell me what makes you sad."

We went to Dr Bhargava's at 12.30 for lunch and came back at 2.30. Before going there we had prepared a mud-plaster for Bapu. On return we went to the place where we learn music every day. Therefore, I could not keep a note of Bapu's conversation with visitors from 12.30 to 3.30. Shankar Raoji and Rajendra Babu came at about midday at Bapu's meal time. Bapu talked to them about Bahawalpur and the payment of 55 crores. Bhimsen Sachar also gave detailed information about Bahawalpur. But the situation there seems to be under control to some extent.

Maulana Habibul Rahman Saheb and other local Muslims complained, "It would be better if you book our passage to England now. Till now we went through fire and water for the sake of the Congress and made all sorts of sacrifices. But now when we have been thrown over by the Congress itself, we can have no *locus standi* in Pakistan."

This stung Bapu to the quick. Feeling annoyed, he said, "I know your fellow countrymen are making your life miserable. That is why I am lingering here. But these fellow countrymen have perhaps gone mad and do not let you live in peace. After all how long can it last and how long has it lasted? You have been suffering for some time in free India, but do you prefer slavery on that score? Moreover, the present nasty situation had its origin in their policy. Do you still prefer slavery to being done to death by your own countrymen? Is this

your *swarajya* and your self-respect ? Do you prefer slavery to living ?” It was well said !

But Bapu was saying this so painfully that he alone could bear the pangs. Bapu’s God alone could know his agony. It caused Bapu’s blood pressure to rise. All these symptoms are ominous. For some reason, I feel out of my element. This morning in his bath Bapu warned me in jest not to be cheerless. But I am feeling ill at ease. For a long time I have had no news from home, either from sister or brother. Whatever the cause of Bapu’s trouble may be, I cannot guess from his present condition what he is going to do next.

While spinning, Bapu talked about South Africa to Sorabji, Rustamji and Pragji who were his comrades in that country.

At 5, Pattani Saheb and mother (Yashomati Pattani) came. As Pattani Saheb is to relinquish the Dewanship¹ of Bhavnagar State, he and his wife came to bid farewell to Bapu. They are on their way to Bhavnagar. For sixty years or so this family has been in the forefront in serving Bhavnagar with a singleness of purpose, the son succeeding his father as Dewan. They are now transferring their authority to the people. Tears welled up in the eyes of Pattani Saheb. He said to me, “I have great claims on you.” Bapu said in fun, “Then you make her Dewan of Bhavnagar.”

Pattani Saheb remarked, “She will not like to give up the dewanship of your *darbar* and come over to Bhavnagar.”

I said, “You make Bapu Dewan and give me the

¹ Chief Ministership.

orderly's badge and warm coat. That will do the trick." . . . The conversation went on in this fashion till it was time for prayer.

Bapu's discourse which is broadcast every day is interrupted by the voices of women and children. Therefore, people cannot hear Bapu's talk clearly. During today's talk Bapu said :

"Today you are not making much noise ; therefore, I am thankful to you. You talk together and the children cry. If this goes on, you had better give up your eagerness to come here. What is the use of looking at this old man's face ? If you can put into practice what this old man says, it may do you some good. What will you gain by merely listening ?

"I have to tell you a sad piece of news today, even as I do every day. Today I have received a painful letter from Andhra which has opened my eyes. I know the old man who has sent this letter. He says that since 15th August, when we attained independence, we have begun to think that we can do whatever we like and do so wherever we like. The Congress and the general public made tremendous sacrifices to win freedom. But in consequence of it why has the Congress degenerated to this extent ? Whoever has been to jail even for a day, or wears khadi, strains every nerve to become a leader somehow or other. M. L. A.'s and M. L. C.'s, who are members of legislative bodies, are engaged in spreading corruption everywhere. How long will it go on ? Therefore, it would be a good thing if the membership of the Assemblies and Councils was reduced. He has written to me in this strain.

“I am well acquainted with the State of Andhra. It makes no difference to me whether I reside here or there. The whole country is mine and I belong to the whole country. To me Pakistan is not a foreign country at all. In the state of Andhra there are communists as well as socialists. They want to disrupt the Congress by fair means or foul. But if all men want to get possession of India in this way, what will happen to India? I appeal to every Indian to consider that we are citizens of India and India is our motherland. These times are so critical that we shall fall into a perilous state again if we create fresh dissensions, one after another, while we are already flying at the throats of each other by labelling ourselves Hindus and Muslims. If we hanker after Government jobs for ourselves and our relations and bend all our energies to that end, God will never forgive us.

“Today some Muslim friends came to me. While they have their permanent complaints, they have started saying that they would not be able to bear oppression any more. Alternately, if they could leave this country, they would escape torture. They added that there was no place for them in Pakistan and the only alternative left to them was to make England their home. . . .

“I have been advising these friends, and will continue to advise them, to wait patiently a little longer and to keep quiet. Government is making every possible effort and it will do whatever it can possibly do in future. Those who are in the Union today should forget that they are Hindus or Muslims, Sikhs or Parsees or Jews. They should

only remember that they are all Indians. Religion is a personal affair for all and we should not drag it into politics. He who tries to suppress another gets suppressed himself. He who digs a pit for others falls into it himself. We are all Indians. Can we die a better death than by defending our country and our people? Every human being must go the way of all flesh. Birth and death are inseparable companions. Why should we fear death then?

Immediately after prayer Bapu started on his silence. Chandwaniji and I wrote out his discourse and handed it to him to look into. During the walk Bapu was in a more cheerful mood. He leaned upon the shoulders of both of us and made us run. Perhaps he did this to drive away the cold from our bodies.

At night, Devadas Kaka, Gopu and Kaki came. All of us played with Gopu. When Gopu comes, the seriousness prevailing in the room gives way to cheerfulness for a while through amusement and play. The office room puts on the appearance of a nursery.

Since Bapu is observing silence, there is perfect quiet. We did nothing in particular, but only followed the daily routine. At nightfall Bapu looked cheerful, which gave us some pleasure.

The Decision to go on a Fast

13

Birla Bhawan, New Delhi
12-1-'48

Prayer at 3.30. Then I took Bapu to the inner apartment. It being his day of silence, Bapu will do everything himself. After covering him with a wrap, I fell asleep. I got up at 6.15 and was ready for work at 6.45 after breakfast. Meanwhile Bapu wrote an article for the *Harijan* and went off to sleep at 6. He got up just at 7. He had an hour's sleep in the morning. He had his massage and bath as usual. Today Bapu seems extremely cheerful. Perhaps weariness lay heavy on him and so he snatched an hour's sleep, which did him a lot of good. Jamnadas Kaka came at lunch time. Bapu finished his lunch at 9.45. Sardar Dada came during this time. He talked about the situation in Kashmir. Sheikh Saheb¹ wants to remove the Maharaja from the throne of Kashmir. The Maharaja is in a bad fix. He has asked for advice. Sheikh's brother-in-law has seized everything and has taken shelter at Indore. This was brought to the notice of Sardar Dada. Bapu is observing silence and so he does not communicate anything by word of mouth.

I pressed Bapu's feet and applied a mud-plaster. At midday we went to take lessons in music and came back at 3.30. In the meantime Bapu wrote his speech in English and asked me to

¹ Sheikh Abdullah, the then Prime Minister of Kashmir.

help him in translating it. Every Monday Sushilaben translates his speech into Hindi. She dictates the translation to me and I quickly reduce it to writing, which saves everybody's time.

The decision to go on a fast

I found a vacant place in the room where I give the massage to Bapu and where Pyarelalji and the Bengalee sister who has come with him are staying ; and there I sat down to translating. Sushilaben suddenly shouted, "Look, Manu, Bapu is starting on a fast tomorrow." On hearing her excited voice I was taken aback. In a trice I burst out, "Is that so ?" She ran to Bapu. Bapu would not have us argue. He signed to us, "You may talk to me when I have broken my silence. Go and finish whatever translation work you have in hand." Sushilaben then went to Ghansham Dasji and asked him to inform Panditji and Sardar Dada.

We have not a moment's leisure. Today we sat down to translate the discourse at the eleventh hour. Therefore, I said to Sushilaben, "If we waste time in talking and the translation is not ready in time, Bapu will be displeased." Hence we sat down again to do the translation. This time Bapu took the decision to fast in an unusual manner. In the afternoon Sardar Dada, Panditji and others came and all of us were also there. Bapu, however, did not throw a hint of his decision to go on a fast to anyone except his own conscience.

Since the last week I have been guessing from Bapu's talk, his manner, his conversation with visitors and his replies to questions that he is

immersed in some serious thought. I myself have been in low spirits. Bapu would repeatedly ask me, "Why do you look dismal?" But at last my guess has come true. If anything is destined to happen to Bapu, I automatically feel uneasy. Many a time I feel dejected and get fever. When this happens, God gives me a glimpse of the inauspicious. If I had mentioned it to Bapu, he would have said, "It is a good omen. You have misinterpreted it." But of all my experiences it is a subjective experience. While going through my diary yesterday and the day before, Bapu said to me ironically, "It seems that you are going to fall ill again. You do not cheer yourself up. That is reflected in your diary. It is due to your temperament that you are afflicted with illness or fever. When you are cheerful and smiling, you look charming; but when you are gloomy, your temperature soars to 102 degrees. This is most unfortunate."

Nobody can know how the fast will end. It is hardly six months when I witnessed Bapu's dreadful fast at Calcutta. There Suhrawardi took the responsibility of the fast upon himself. But here we have a heterogeneous population. The people have no leader. Who is going to take the responsibility? Ordinarily, Bapu's fasts are not directed against outbreaks of violence but against leaders who resort to corrupt practices and try to run down one another. What will be the outcome of this terrible ordeal?

The discourse

This was today's discourse word for word: "To improve their health people observe fasts according

to the laws of health. When a man commits a sin and realizes it, then too he performs a fast to atone for it. Such people need not believe in non-violence. An occasion may arise when a votary of non-violence is obliged to undertake a fast to protest against a social injustice. He can do so only when he has no other way open to him in his capacity as a votary of non-violence. I am now facing such a situation.

“When I came to Delhi from Calcutta on 9th September, I was *en route* to the Punjab. But fate ordained otherwise. On that day this beautiful and magnificent city looked like a city of the dead. As soon as I detrained, I saw gloom writ large on the face of everybody. Even Sardar who always looked cheerful and indulged in laughter and jests was not free from despondency. I did not know the reason of it at that time. He had come to the station to receive me. The first report that he gave was that disturbances had broken out in the capital of the Union. I realised at once that I would have to do or die in Delhi. For fear of the police and the troops Delhi is quiet outwardly, but the fire of animosity is smouldering in the hearts of the people. It can burst into a blaze any time and come to the surface. Such a situation cannot fulfil my vow ‘to do’ and save me from death. Peace maintained by the police or troops is not sufficient to save me from death, like which there is no other friend. I earnestly long to see the establishment of heartfelt friendship among Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. Erstwhile they were living on friendly terms, but today the life of the greatest of the Muslims is not safe from the knife, bullet or bomb

of the Hindu or the Sikh. This is something which any Indian patriot (who is worthy of that name) cannot patiently endure.

Fast : the last weapon

“My inner voice has been calling to me for some days past, but I have been turning a deaf ear to it. I thought that it might be the voice of Satan, that is, my own weakness. I never like to give up hope. No satyagrahi¹ should. Fast is, of course, the last weapon. It is a substitute for one's own sword or that of another. The Muslims posed the question: ‘What are we to do now?’ I had no solution to offer. For some time my helplessness has been eating into my vitals. It will end as soon as I start a fast. I have been thinking over the matter for the last three days. At last a decision flashed across my mind like lightning, and now I am happy. No human being who is pure of heart can sacrifice anything of greater value than his own life. I hope and pray that I may have the purity to undertake the fast. I shall allow myself the latitude to take hot water with or without salt, soda and lemon juice. The fast will begin after the first meal tomorrow morning.

“It will last for an indefinite period. I will break the fast when I am convinced that the various communities have resumed their friendly relations, not because of pressure from outside but of their own free will.

“Today India has fallen in the estimation of all nations. The glory of India is disappearing from

¹ Follower of truth.

the heart of Asia and through it from the heart of the world. It will be restored if this fast opens our eyes. I have the temerity to believe that if India loses its soul, the tempest-tossed and famished world will be deprived of its ray of hope.

“Let no friend or enemy—if there be one—curse me. There are friends who think that fasting is not the proper way of redeeming the heart of man. I hope they will forgive me and give me the liberty they claim for themselves. My sole counsellor is God and I am taking this decision without consulting anybody. If I have erred and if I realise it, I will publicly admit it and retrace my steps. But there is little possibility of it. If my inner voice is true, and I claim that it is so, I cannot override it. I pray that no one should reason with me over this matter. I crave the sympathy of all in my irrevocable decision. If my fast has the desired effect on the whole of India or at least on Delhi, it will end early. But whether it is broken early or late or never, no one should betray weakness on such an occasion.

Fast for self-awakening

“Several fasts have come into my life. On the occasion of my first fast critics said it had a coercive effect on the people. If I had not undertaken the fast, people would have independently thought over the merits and demerits of the purpose of the fast and in that case their decision would have been to the contrary. If it can be established that the purpose is laudible, an opinion to the contrary has no value. True fast is like true observance of one's duty. It has its own reward. I do not want to

perform a fast for effect. I am fasting because I must.

“I pray to all to think over this fast with a cool and unbiassed mind. If I am to die, let me die in peace. I hope I shall soon have peace. I shall be happy to secure my freedom through death instead of being a helpless spectator of the downfall of India, Hinduism, Sikhism and Islam. If Pakistan does not confer equal rights on people of all faiths and safeguard their lives and property and India follows suit, then both the countries are doomed to certain ruin. In that case India and Pakistan will be destroyed, not the rest of the world, as Hinduism and Sikhism do not exist outside India.

“As regards those who differ from me, the stiffer the resistance they offer to me, the more I will esteem them. My fast is intended to rouse the souls of men, not to kill them. Just think for a while how much pollution has crept into our beloved India. Then you will be glad to see that an upholder of the dignity of India, who possesses the necessary strength and perhaps the necessary purity, is out to put an end to this pollution. If he is lacking in strength he is a mere burden on earth. The sooner he departs and lifts his burden from India, the better it will be for him and all other people.

“On hearing of my fast people should not run to me. It will be enough if they endeavour to improve the surrounding situation.

Letter from Andhra

“Yesterday I told you something about two letters from Andhra. The sender of one of

the letters is my aged friend Deshbhakt Konda Venketappaya Maru. I quote from his letter :

“ ‘A vexing problem of our political life, apart from its economic aspect, is the moral degradation of Congressmen. I cannot say much about other states, but the conditions in my state are very bad. The acquisition of political power has turned the heads of people. Many members of the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council are trying to take full advantage of their position.

“ ‘Taking advantage of their contacts with people, they are making money for themselves and hampering the even course of justice by influencing the magistrates in their courts. District Collectors and other revenue officers cannot do their duty unobstructed. The members of the Council interfere with their work. No honest officer can stay at one place for long. Complaints are sent against him to the Ministers and the latter listen to the unprincipled and self-seeking complainants. The longing for *swarajya* (self-government) was so keen that men and women had come to accept your leadership. But when their objective was attained, the belligerent Congressmen broke loose from their moral restraints. Many old veterans who were bitter opponents of our struggle, are now siding with such people. They are enlisting themselves in the Congress to serve their own selfish ends. The problem is becoming more complex day by day. As a result, the Congress and the Congress Government are falling into disrepute. People are losing their faith in the Congress. Recently Municipal elections were held here. These elections have proved how fast the

Congress is losing its hold on the people. After the arrangements for elections were fully completed, they were stopped on receiving an urgent message from the Minister for Local Self-Government at Guntur.

“ ‘I understand that for the last ten years here all authority has been vested in a nominated Council, and since last year Municipal administration has been entrusted to a Commissioner. It is presumed that the Government will now appoint a Council to take over the Municipal administration of the town.

“ ‘I have grown old and have broken one of my legs. I can only limp a little out of my house on crutches. I have no axe to grind. It is no doubt true that I sharply criticise the leading Congressmen who are members of the District and State Congress Committees, each of which is divided into two parties ; and all people know my views. People are in a state of revolt because of the factions in the Congress, the greed for money-making on the part of the members of the Legislative Council and the weakness of the Ministers. They say that British rule was far better than this maladministration. They even abuse Congressmen.’

“ ‘The people of Andhra and other states should appreciate the words of this selfless worker. He is right in saying that these corrupt practices are not confined to Andhra. He can, of course, only narrate his experiences of Andhra. Let us all beware.

“ ‘I must advise my friends from Bahawalpur to be patient. Sardar Patel came to see me this afternoon. I was observing silence and was very busy.

So I could not have a talk with him. Shri Shankar of his office was to come to me but he did not. So I could not put your case before him."

The prompting of the inner voice

On return from his prayer Bapu went direct to see Mountbatten. The atmosphere of Birla Bhawan is full of deep gloom but Bapu is cheerful to the same extent.

Lord Mountbatten has invited Bhai Saheb, Sushilaben and Pyarelalji to tomorrow's party. Bhai Saheb was not at all inclined to go to the party. He consulted Bapu. Bapu said, "You must go there. Go and see if wine is served there. Probably there will be some talk about my fast there. If so, you can put my views before him."

Bapu had gone to see Mountbatten at 3.30. By the time he returned from there, at 7.45, his room was well packed with visitors. Bapu asked all of them not to worry and added, "Go on with your work wherever you may be." He asked Devabhai to go to Patna. Suhrawardi Saheb came. I said, "Bapu, Suhrawardi Saheb has some ancestral connection with your fasts." Bapu said, "Look ! What this girl is saying !"

Just then Jawaharlal came. All others went out. Sushilaben went to Sardar Dada. Sardar Dada is steeped in anxiety and is also irritated.

A train carrying Hindus and Sikhs has arrived from Peshawar. It was mercilessly attacked. Since Bapu decided to go on a fast without consulting anyone, . . . is much annoyed.

Bapu said, "I have been here since September last. I see that men say one thing to my face and

do something else. I take these men at their word and people trust me. The unfortunate people have to suffer the consequences of the dissensions between Malpractices are on the increase in Even Mountbatten admits that this fast, which is not against any individual, will be productive of good results. He has been able to understand the significance of it. If Indian character is purged of this evil, all our troubles will be over."

Bapu lay down in bed at 10 in a very cheerful mood. I massaged his head with oil. Devadas Kaka and Jamnadas Kaka came. They made some necessary changes in Bapu's discourse. Devadas Kaka did not argue much against the fast, but he did ask, "After all, is this fast against Pakistan?"

Bapu said, "Yes. It is true in a way. My fast is against everybody. All should purify their souls."

To Jamnadas Kaka, Bapu said in jest, "It looks as if you have come to put me on a fast."

Jamnadas Kaka said, "My coming here has by chance coincided with your starting on a fast. It is like the perching of a crow on a palm tree and the chance falling of a fruit from it immediately. That is it."

After finishing his discourse and going through other engagements Bapu went off to sleep at 12.30, and all visitors departed.

Before leaving us Devadas Kaka handed me a letter for Bapu and asked me to give it to him in the morning.

All night I felt very anxious about Bapu. His mental agony had become unbearable during the last week. Moral and social corruption is, of course,

widespread in the country, and Bapu has no peace even within the confines of this Birla House. He would say, "My dreams of an ideal India are being shattered, but I do not mind it much. My inner voice is, however, prompting me to do my duty.

"God blinds me for a while, and then He flashes the truth across my mind like lightning. Therefore, I feel no remorse."

What troubles me is this. On the one hand, Bapu is passing through terrible suffering, and on the other, is dreaming of his marriage at the age of 50. What a stroke of luck ! Absorbed in these thoughts, I could not get off to sleep till 3 o'clock in the night. Such reasons have combined to compel Bapu to go on fast. I feel that India has ceased to have any attraction for Bapu now. It seems that he will not survive long. I am much distressed but I am helpless. I am too young to plead with Therefore, I dare not broach the subject to him. But I am sick of it.

Birla Bhawan, New Delhi
13-1-'48

Prayer at 3.30 as usual. We sang this psalm in our prayer : 'The path to God is for the brave, not for cowards.'

Bapu's affection

While talking about . . . , Bapu said to me, "Since yesterday you have fallen a prey to anxiety on my account. Take courage and put the agitation of your heart to the best advantage. Ask him and reason it out with him. It is immaterial whether he is older or younger than you. The present state is quite different from what it was at Calcutta. Give up your anxiety for me and entrust me to the care of God. Just think how you can bring him round by explaining the true position to him in a loving manner. That will be advantageous to him, to society and to all of us. You have the emotion but not the courage. Put more confidence in yourself and everything will come all right. If he wants to marry, let him do so. In that case we shall be able to see him in his true colours, and that will be to the advantage of all. This time my fast is not only against Hindus and Muslims but also against the Judases who put on false appearances and betray themselves, myself and society. Because of such evil tendencies people are ready to cut the throats of their own brothers. I put a great



Collecting money for Harijan Fund *en route* from Calcutta to Delhi.

deal of confidence in you. If you take courage in both hands, everything can be done. If you do not rise to the occasion, you will never be able to face things boldly. Others may well desert me ; I shall be content to live alone. This is the second phase of the great sacrifice. You will have to bear a great deal ; it won't do to be spiritless like this."

I wept profusely and could not utter a single word. If an enemy, instead of me, had heard these instructive and sincere words, he would have trembled. Bapu has to be the victim of the disloyalty of those who are regarded as his own people. But these people get away with it, because they are taken for Bapu's people. Praise be to God ! . . . lives at Noakhali but meets with no opposition now. There is no opposition at Rajkot either. Thus, people are able to save their skin under the cover of Bapu's name. Yet they brag about their escape. But God only knows what the consequence will be of Bapu's forbearance and long-drawn tolerance in this respect.

In your case I am the culprit

Truly, it is God's grace that Bapu is not dissatisfied with me in any other respect. When I asked him particularly about this thing, he said, "The only ground for my dissatisfaction with you is your poor health. God might put an end to my life as a result of this fast, but my soul would linger in my body because I was not able to restore you to health. I have not been able to find anyone who will take care of you after I am gone. You have grown very weak, and it is I who am responsible for it. I have extracted work from you for 18 to 20

hours a day while you are an immature girl of only 16 or 17 years. I have taken the place of your mother and so I am the culprit. If you are a little more careful, you can save my life."

I have grown so spiritless that I might lose Bapu. Bapu's love for, and confidence in, me is increasing day by day. At the first opportunity he went through my diary. I saw him fast at Calcutta for the first time in my life, yet I did not lose heart then. This time I am stricken with a nameless feeling. Now my sincere prayer to God is : O Lord, I may not be able to help Bapu, but the least I wish is that I may never prove disloyal to him, consciously or unconsciously. Give me the strength not to add to his grief when he is already grief-stricken.

Bapu's blessings

Bapu's unbearable grief has no end. The memory of Mahadeva Kaka is vividly flashing upon the mind today. There is no one now who can act as a mediator between Bapu and the leaders. In fact, there is not one left who would act as a mediator between Bapu, his close friends who owned their loyalty to him and the people in general. God only knows what He has in His mind. What I wish is that I may not be guilty of any impropriety or unfortunate act.

After hearing in the morning the grave words of Bapu which were overflowing with affection for, and confidence in, me, I did not have the heart to hand Devadas's letter to him. I broke down with tears as never before. I am writing this in my diary at 12:30. Bapu's loving and tender hand is gently passing over my back. While its language is

echoing in my ears, I am conceiving a different future.

Before going to bed, Bapu handed a letter to me, which ran as follows :

“Dear Manudi¹,

If you can keep up your courage, the whole tenor of my life will change. You possess infinite powers but they do not blossom forth. This is due to your diffidence. Think well, it is this diffidence that lets you down. Suppose you think it your duty to dine with a certain family, because your parents like it. Now, you should have the courage of your convictions and say so publicly. You are often down with illness but you do not know how it grieves me. Think how implicitly Jayasukh Lal trusts me. Therefore, if you do not recover fully, I shall feel deeply grieved in mind and body.

13-1-'48

Blessings from Bapu.”

After reading this letter I betook myself to a secluded place, so that no one might observe me, and cried my eyes out. How can I repay Bapu for his loving care of me. He has not forgotten me while passing through his terrible ordeal.

Bapu's fasts

This is the 15th fast in Bapu's life.

1. The first came in Phoenix Ashram of Africa in 1913. He fasted for 7 days on account of the moral lapse of

2. The second also came in Phoenix Ashram of South Africa in 1914. . . . went back on his

¹ Pet name for Manu.

pledged word and betrayed Bapu. Bapu fasted for 14 days.

3. In 1918 he fasted for three days at Ahmedabad when there was a strike by labourers.

4. In 1921 when the Prince of Wales visited India, he fasted for 4 days to stop the trouble which started over the question of welcoming the Prince or boycotting his visit.

5. In 1924 when Hindu-Muslim riots broke out, he fasted in Delhi for 21 days to do penance, to pray to God and to bring peace to his soul.

6. In 1924 he fasted for one week in Sabarmati Ashram on account of the immoral behaviour of some students.

7. In 1932 Appasaheb Patvardhan demanded to do scavenging work in Yeravda Central Jail, but the jail authorities turned down his demand. Consequently Bapu started on a fast unto death. Ba fasted for 2 days in sympathy with him.

8. In 1932 he resolved to fast unto death for the sake of Harijans, but he gave up the fast in a week when the matter was settled.

9. In 1933 he went on a fast for 21 days in Yeravda Jail in support of the Harijan movement and to purify his own soul. But he was released earlier from the Jail, and he completed the remaining period of his fast in Parnkuti at Poona.

10. For offering individual *satyagrah* Bapu was put in Yeravda Jail. There he sought permission to work on behalf of Harijans. This was refused by Government. So he began a fast, but on the 7th day he was released from jail.

11. In 1934 while he was on a tour to amelio-

rate the condition of Harijans, an orthodox Hindu assaulted a Harijan in a public meeting at Ajmer. To atone for it, Bapu fasted for 7 days in Sevagram Ashram.

12. He fasted in 1935 on the occasion of Rajkot *satyagrah*. But the fast came to an end in 4 days on account of the successful intervention of the Viceroy.

13. In 1942 he fasted for 21 days in Agha Khan Palace at the time of the 'Quit India' agitation to demand justice.

14. He fasted for 73 hours in Biliaghat at Calcutta because of the animosity existing between Hindus and Muslims.

15. In 1948 this fast is being undertaken at Delhi with the determination to bring about heartfelt friendship or to die.

Fast to last till peace is established

Sorabji Rustamji of Africa, Pragji of Johannesburg and Mohanlal Amarshi accompanied Bapu on his walk. Before that Bapu wrote a preface to a book by Romain Rolland.

During the walk somebody said, "If this fast were to end in death, not a single Muslim would be found alive in the Union."

Bapu said, "None of you can advise me on this point or understand it rightly. Why? I cannot give an answer. I have faith in Jawaharlal. He did not argue about the matter at all. But if Sardar approves of it, I shall rest assured. Jawahar is neither happy nor sad."

Rajkumariben also came. She seems to approve of this step of Bapu. She thinks that it will be good

for the country. There was a talk about the payment of 55 crores of rupees to Pakistan. It is necessary to convince Sardar Dada. In the meantime some journalists and photographers, Kaki, Dr Jivraj Kaka and many other persons had collected outside.

The menu for Bapu's last meal before the fast was this : chapatis $2\frac{1}{2}$, apple 8 oz., milk 16 oz., and grape-fruit three slices. Bapu finished his last meal exactly at 11 and then the prayer started.

We began with a Buddhist prayer which was followed by a Muslim and a Hindu prayer. After that we sang : 'From untruth lead me to truth, from darkness lead me to light, from death lead me to immortality.' We ended by singing 'When I survey the Wondrous Cross'. An atmosphere of gravity and gloom prevailed.

Everyone is putting this question : "Why is Bapu going on a fast when there is no trouble ?"

Bapu says in reply, "If a person were suffering from an incurable disease, an instantaneous death would certainly be preferable to a slow and painful one. In China the sentence of death is executed in the right way—a button is pressed and the criminal is finished. I have been waiting patiently for a long time. Can Maulana Saheb or Suhrawardi move about freely in Hindu quarters today ? So long as they cannot do so, I do not think real peace has come."

Hakim Ajmal Khan's son said, "You had better put off your fast, since there is no trouble in the offing." Maulana Saheb interposed, "What he has decided upon is irrevocable, even if we die in the

attempt to change his mind. Now we must do something to wean him from the fast."

The D. I. G. of Delhi arrived. He gave a detailed account of the happenings at Calcutta and assured Bapu that he would do his level best.

Sardar Dada and Maniben said, "After sacrificing our all we should not deviate from the path of truth. If we go back upon our pledge, what mark of distinction have we in comparison with others?" Bapu watched a demonstration of wireless as given by Deshbandhu Gupta and Hansraj. The Maharaja of Dhrangadhra came. Purushottamdas Trikamdas also came. He unfolded the real story of the disturbance at Bombay and gave an account of the scandalous dealings of a top-ranking Congressman in that connection.

Establish Ramarajya

When Bapu finished his spinning, Pattani Saheb came. He had given me some historic photographs of Bapu to be autographed by him. Bapu was asked to affix his signature to every photograph with the caption 'Blessings from Bapu'. He gave me two thousand rupees with the proviso that I was not to disclose the name of the donor and the amount was to be spent at Bapu's discretion. I made over the money to Bapu in his presence. Pattani Saheb said to me, "I have no claim on you but you have on me." I could not understand his meaning at once, but I broke into a laugh.

He is leaving for Bhavnagar tomorrow. It was Bapu who pressed him to participate in the inauguration ceremony. Bapu's fast begins today. The atmosphere is overcast. There is no knowing what

will happen. In these circumstances Pattani Saheb was not inclined to go there. Besides, the Maharaja of Bhavnagar and his Dewan are eagerly looking forward to the presence of Bapu at the function. Pattani Saheb felt a lump in his throat, and, when he found his voice, he said to Bapu, "I shall be very pleased if you find it convenient to come to my residence at 5, Mansingh Road."

Bapu said, "If I remember correctly, I have been there once. But now I have to do or die at Delhi. If peace comes, I shall be free to leave Delhi and then I will go and stay with you at Bhavnagar. If I had been thereabouts and there had been peace, I would have certainly attended the function. But one cannot always have one's way. I hope something will come of this. If God has made me his instrument, He will certainly bestow sanity on the people. Or, if I have survived my usefulness, he will put an end to my life and that will be a blessing to me. Meanwhile, I have a lot of work for you to do and you put all your skill into it.

"When the administration of Bhavnagar has been made over to the people, you use your skill in persuading the other princes of Kathiawar to tread the same path. You know the princes of Kathiawar well and they know you equally well. Show to the world how the princes and dewans have worked in unison for the common good. I am eagerly waiting for the day when all the princes, following the example of the Maharaja of Bhavnagar of their own free will, will hand over their all to the people and dedicate themselves to their service and try to give

a concrete shape to my dream of Ramarajya in this part of India. Then you may take me to your home in Kathiawar and Bhavnagar. Otherwise, I cannot bear to go there.

Insistence on going to Mahua

“There is a pretty village on the bank of the Tarya not far from Bhavnagar. I went to that village when your father was alive. It is said that there God revealed himself to Narsingh Mehta.” Bapu could not recall the name of that village, so he paused a while. Then Pattani Saheb said, “Gopnathan.” Bapu said, “Yes, yes. I liked it very much. On that occasion Mahadeva was with me. Your father sang a hymn to me while spinning.”

I intervened, “Then, Bapu, my Mahua (village) is very close to it.” Pattani Saheb said, “This girl talks of Mahua again and again. A most dirty village that is !” I said, “In spite of yourself ?” He said, “We have long since put it under the local Municipality. If the Chairman of that elected body has no guts, nothing is feasible.” I said, “But if somebody talks of Bhavnagar, Mahua springs up before my mind’s eye.” Pattani Saheb said in his own ironical way, “Silly girl ! Let Bapu come to Bhavnagar first, then we shall see about your Mahua.”

Bapu broke into a laugh. Then Pattani Saheb bade good-bye to Bapu with folded hands and took leave of him. Tears streamed down his face. My hair stood on end.

Let us benefit by his experience

When he was gone, Bapu said, “He had to go

disappointed because of my fast. He has invited you ; if you wish you may go there for a day. You will have a change and feel happy." I refused. If Bapu had not begun his fast, I would have thought it over.

Bapu said, "He will be equally glad at your visit instead of mine. Look, he is himself going there because he has accepted my advice. Otherwise, he is very obstinate. He is ever ready to abide by my advice. Note that he loves you more dearly than his own daughter, because you serve me and carry out my wish, whether you like it or not. He has absolute faith in me and thinks that my advice is always advantageous to him. For this reason he accepts my advice."

I asked, "What will he do after relinquishing his post as Dewan ?"

Bapu said, "If I survive this penance, I will manage to get a lot of work out of him. He is a competent man. He will do a great deal of work ; only one should know how to utilise his services. He works only for those who know how to take work from him, not for others. Therefore, I must profit by his experience. I feel that if we do not benefit by the experience of a man of his calibre through our prejudices, we shall fail miserably. You will have noticed that in my letter I urged upon Balwant Rai and Manubhai the need for taking full advantage of his advice and experience. We must be humble. Let us see what happens."

Today Bapu does not appear tired or weak. He says, "I am feeling more energetic today than on

other days, because the burden on my mind has become lighter.”

The first day

As usual Bapu went to prayer with great eagerness. He said, “I should like to finish my talk in 15 minutes, but there is so much to be said that I may take a few minutes more.

“This is just the first day of my fast and I have had my morning meal at that. I started to eat at 9.30, but during that time I had to see so many visitors that I could not finish my meal till 11 o’clock. Possibly I may not be able to walk to the prayer-ground from tomorrow. But if you all desire that the prayer should be held every day, you can all come here and one or more of these girls will conduct the prayer.

“Yesterday I spoke about the refugees from Bahawalpur. There has been some misunderstanding in assuming that Sardar’s Secretary cannot come to see me on his own. Maniben told me that he was unable to come at 2 o’clock but was free to come at any other time. I could not make out her meaning, and hence this confusion. But this is nothing serious. I do not expect government servants to dance attendance on private individuals. Some people do not see eye to eye with me and so I must make my view-point clear to them.

They must confess their guilt

“Well, let us come down to brass tacks. Today countless people came to see me. All of them put one and the same question : Against whom is this fast and who is in fault ? But who am I to hold

anybody responsible ? In the event of my not surviving this fast, you should take it that the responsibility was mine. If I am unworthy, God will not let me survive. Because I am a perfect Hindu, I am much distressed to see that Hindus do not perform their duty. Today Hindus have set their mind on driving away every Muslim from this country. But this mentality is undesirable. They are thus doing violence to their own religion and their kind. It is true that I uphold the rights of the minorities ; but it is the duty of every man to render every possible help to the innocent people who are made the scapegoats of the decisions of the leaders and others and are kept in a state of bondage. Therefore, this fast is really for the purification of my own soul. It is an appeal to God to purify the souls of all and to make them sane. Everyone's heart has to be made pure. I do not say that only Hindus and Sikhs are to be purified and not the Muslims. The Muslims too are to be completely purged of their sins. The Muslims of this country are not entirely free from blame. So everybody must confess his fault. I have never undertaken a fast to placate anyone ; I want to please God alone.

“Before India was partitioned, the Muslim League played a major role in estranging people, besides getting the country divided. The League is overwhelmingly responsible for this inhuman act. But other Muslims and Hindus and Sikhs have also committed mistakes. If it is desired to bring about true friendship between the three communities, all must search and purify their hearts.

To Muslim Friends

“Now I want to say a few words to my Muslim friends with due deference. I have started this fast for their sake and so their responsibility has increased. They should at least make up their minds to live in amity with Hindus and Sikhs. Those who wish to remain in the Union must pledge their loyalty to the Union. They allege their loyalty but act differently. I call upon them to talk little and do enough work.

“Many Muslim friends tell me that Jawaharlalji is quite sensible, but Sardar has little sympathy with the Muslims. I am taken aback at hearing such things. If Muslims talk in this strain, how can we progress? Sardar and Jawahar jointly carry on the administration. They are your servants and, with the other members of the cabinet, are collectively responsible to the people. If Sardar has really made some mistakes, tell me without fear. I will do what I can. But accusations cannot be based on mere hearsay. I would decide the matter in my own way. I would ask you not to depend on Sardar, Jawahar, Gandhi or the Muslim League but to put your trust in God.

“At times Sardar might use harsh or bitter language, but I know that there is no harshness or bitterness in his heart. He neither fears nor fails to speak the truth. He declared at Lucknow that Muslims were welcome to stay in India if they so desired. But he does not trust the Muslim Leaguers. I do not think there is any impropriety in his statement. One should say what one feels, and one has a right to have his own suspicions. But

Muslims should not put a wrong interpretation on his suspicions. For my part, I believe that suspicions should not be entertained. If a man's guilt is proved he should be suitably punished for it. After all, Sardar holds a position and the entire responsibility is his.

Foot it alone

“We have just sung this psalm : ‘You have to tread your path by yourself, so you must foot it alone.’ I love this psalm with all my heart. It was sung every day on my tour through Noakhali. It says : ‘Even if nobody accompanies you, you must go along your way alone ; God is always with you.’ Therefore, if Hindus and Sikhs cannot guarantee safety to the minorities, what interest has life for me ? I would say that, even if all Hindus and Sikhs were slain in Pakistan, the life of even a puny Muslim child must be protected in this country. It is surely cowardice to kill the weak and the helpless.

Need for introspection

Delhi is on its trial now. What I demand is that any amount of slaughter in any part of India or Pakistan should not deflect the people of Delhi from the path of duty. Peace must be maintained in Delhi at all costs and its population must remain intact, so that men like Suhrawardi, who is reputed to be the doyen of ruffians, may go about in safety wherever they please. Today I find that it is positively risky for people like Suhrawardi Saheb to come to this prayer-meeting, much more so to go anywhere else. An insult done to him is an insult done to me. Therefore, I cannot bring him here. Whatever his

reputation, I must say that I had his fullest co-operation at Calcutta. There he dispossessed all Muslims of the houses of Hindus which they had forcibly occupied and restored those houses to the Hindus. Therefore, all communities, that is, all Indians, should practise introspection and become true Indians by replacing bestiality by humanity. If they cannot do so, at least my living in this world is futile."

Bapu has given up his constitutionals from today. After going through his written discourse, he had a long talk with Panditji. He weighed 111 lb. today.

Bapu went through the following routine today. He drank plain hot water at 11.15 a.m. ; visited the lavatory after that ; then dozed off, having applied 12 oz. of mud-plaster ; drank plain hot water at 2 ; drank 8 oz. of water at 4 and then span for some time ; drank 8 oz. of plain water after prayer ; got ready to go to bed at 10 p.m. All retired to their respective apartments at 11.45. Today there was no end to the stream of visitors, known or unknown.

After the prayer we went to Birla Mandir. Today Bapu drank $36\frac{1}{2}$ to 40 oz. of water, but a smaller quantity was ejected. His kidneys have not been functioning properly ever since the last fast. Let us see what happens this time. Possibly for this reason he has not lost weight. When he went to bed at night, great weakness was noticeable in his voice and all over the face. Of course, he had to exert himself a good deal today.

I am completing my diary now. Before going to bed I prayed to God from my heart to spare Bapu

the rest of this ordeal—Bapu who is the hope of millions and the mainstay of the country's children and youngsters, men and women, rich and poor, princes and paupers ; the skinny octogenarian who is the sole idol of their worship and the repository of their confidence.

Birla Bhawan, New Delhi
14.1.'48

Last exchange of letters between
father and son

I woke up during the night twice. The anxiety about Bapu lying heavy on my mind, I could not have enough sleep. My anxiety is further aggravated because of severe cold. Bapu passed the night more or less restfully. Trusting to his stamina, Bapu brushed his teeth standing, as was his wont. I asked, "Bapu, do you feel exhausted?" Bapu replied, "Today I don't feel like fasting." Then he said to Sarla, "You must chalk out your programme. So far you have done nothing to please me."

After prayer I took Bapu to the inner apartments. He read again Devadas Kaka's letter which was received last night, and dictated the reply. There had been endless correspondence between father and son, but this letter and its reply turned out to be the last in their life-time. Devadas Kaka's letter and Bapu's reply are equally remarkable.

13.1.'48

3.30 a.m.

Most revered saintly father,

Your announcement was made in haste. There were many possibilities of improving it. I had a lot to say about the propriety of the fast, but I had no knowledge of it. Nor did anybody take the

trouble of informing me. I would have come early enough to have my say. I have learnt about it from dear Manu just now. My main concern and contention is that you gave way to despair. This step required a lot of forethought. Since you came to Delhi, you have gained a lot of success through sheer patient hard work. Perhaps you have overlooked this fact. By your strenuous efforts laes of lives were saved and laes more would have been saved. But all of a sudden you lost patience. What you can achieve while living, you cannot achieve by dying. I pray to you to give up the fast on this score alone.

—*Respects from Devadas*

14.5.'48. Makar Sankranti

Dear Devadas,

I read your letter this morning after prayer. I have also realized the significance of what you suggested yesterday. According to your view-point the announcement was made in haste, but it is not right to say so. Yet, from my point of view it was certainly a hasty announcement, because I took shorter time in making it than I usually do. Before making it I deliberated over it for four days and also prayed. The announcement was the outcome of that deliberation and prayer. Therefore, it cannot be called 'hasty' in my terminology or in that of others who were in the know. The announcement needed improvement in respect of the ideas embodied in it or the clarity of its language, and I did improve it in the light of your suggestions. I did not like to hear from you or from anybody else arguments against the propriety of the fast. What I have listened to only points to my good sense and patience. You

had intimation of it earlier. Your fear and your argument are meaningless. True, you are a friend and have come to occupy a high position, but the 'son' in you cannot cease to exist under any circumstances. Hence your anxiety is but natural. But your argument is only an exhibition of your immature thoughts and impatience.

I regard my decision to fast as the utmost limit of my patience. But patience which divorces us from our objective is not patience but foolishness. I cannot take the credit of what good results have come to light in Delhi after my coming here. If I do so, it will be nothing short of delusion. Whether one or many lives have been saved through my efforts cannot be estimated in this world. Its value can be assessed only by an omniscient being. To say that the man who exercised patience from the beginning of September upto the present moment and 'lost it all of a sudden' surely betrays ignorance, if nothing else. To look at it from a practical point of view, when my efforts proved fruitless, I took shelter in the arms of God. In order to understand the significance of my fast you should read the poem entitled *Gajendra-moksha*, which is regarded as a great classic of the world. Then only you will perhaps be able to appreciate my action.

The last sentence of your letter is a beautiful expression of your affection for me. This affection has its roots in ignorance or illusion. This illusion is common to all, therefore it cannot take the place of true knowledge. When we have not been able to know the reality of life and death, to say that 'something can be accomplished only by living in this world' is sheer hallucination. 'Act as long as

you live' is a sound principle, but we must supply the missing words, 'act without attachment'. You will perhaps understand it now. Your request is not worth accepting. Therefore, only God who has ordained this fast can make me give it up. In the meantime you and all others should bear in mind that it is equally profitable whether God ends my life or allows me to survive. I have only one prayer to offer : 'O God, keep me firm during the fast lest I should hastily break it in the temptation to live.' Preserve this letter which I have thoughtfully dictated to dear Manu, and read it from time to time.

—*Blessings from Bapu.*"

Letter to Gujrati brothers and sisters

"I wrote this letter on Wednesday morning while lying in bed. This is the second day of my fast but twenty-four hours have not yet passed. This is the last day for despatching the mail for the *Harijan*. Therefore, it is meet to say a few words to Gujratis.

"I do not regard this fast as an ordinary one. I have entered upon it with serious deliberation. Yet the inspirer of it is not my mind but Rama or, if you prefer it, Rahim, who controls all thoughts. This fast is not directed against anybody in particular but against all. There is no anger or an iota of hastiness behind it. There is a time for everything. If we miss the chance, a delayed performance has no value. Therefore, we must consider what remains to be done by every Indian. Indians include Gujratis and so I am writing this in Gujrati language. It is meant for all Gujrati-speaking Indians.

“Delhi is the capital of India. If we make no distinction in our hearts between the Hindus and the Muslims of India—do not regard them as two nations—Delhi today is not the capital of that India with which we were familiar on the map, although Delhi has been its capital through the ages. Hastinapur is in this country and so is Indraprastha. We can see their ruins even today. This Delhi is the heart of India. It would be the height of folly to say that it belongs to Hindus or to Sikhs. There is not the least exaggeration in this statement. It may irk your ears but it is the whole truth. All people who live in this country from Cape Comorin to Kashmir and from Karachi to Dibrugarh in Assam, whether Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Parsees or Jews, and who are moved by a spirit of service and love for the country, have a claim upon India. Nobody dare say that this country is meant for the majority community only and that the minority communities are to be neglected. Anyone who loves the country best has the greatest claim on it. Therefore, he who tries to drive away the Muslims from the country is enemy number one of Delhi and, therefore, of India. Unfortunately we are advancing towards that stage today.

“Every Indian must contribute his mite to avoiding this catastrophe. How can we do so? This is the way. If we want to establish panchayat-raj or democratic rule, we must accept that the humblest Indian is as much the lord of India as the greatest. To that end he must be pure of heart. If his heart is not already pure, he must purify it. Purity of heart and social equality must go together, so that he may not fall a prey to distinctions of caste and

ereed. He must treat all others as his equals and bind them to himself with ties of love. He must not look upon anybody as an untouchable and must treat the labourer and the millionaire as equals. He will thus learn to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow and put the pen and the spade on a footing of equality. He will even act as a scavenger to bring about the millennium. He will not touch opium or wine in his wisdom. He will naturally take a vow to use *swadeshi*¹. He will treat every woman other than his own wife as his mother, sister or daughter according to her age. He will not cast a lustful eye on any woman, nor cherish an evil desire, and he will concede equal rights to women. If the occasion demands, he will sacrifice his own life rather than kill others ; and he will act as bravely as the *gurus*² of the Sikhs. He will face a host all alone and will not budge a step from his position. Such an Indian will not require to be told what part he has to play in this great sacrifice.

14.1.'48

—*M. K. Gandhi.*"

Penance for injustice and sin

Bapu walked to the table for massage at 8 o'clock and went to the bath at 9. In the bath Sushilaben read to him the telegrams received from India and abroad. Speaking of Suhrawardi, Bapu said, "This man is very shrewd. Jinnah offered him a seat in the cabinet or any other rank of honour which he might choose. When Suhrawardi consulted me about it, I returned to him only one answer : 'You must

¹ Country-made goods as opposed to foreign goods.

² Religious preceptors.

expatiate for your injustice and sins against the Hindus by becoming a faithful friend of the Hindus and giving up the temptation of holding a rank in the government.' He has since given up the temptation. I will now send him to Eastern Bengal."

Let us be human

In the bath Bapu grew angry with..... Bapu is distressed when a simple thing is given a twist. He is feeling very weak. In a certain context, he said, "I will put this girl to a test. She will be consumed by the fire of her own vanity or untruth. I never thought that both of them were so crooked. Mahadeo did warn me, but his warning is of no use now. We must be content with what God has destined for us. Even King Yudhishtira whose rule extended far and wide, while ascending to heaven, had to see with his own eyes the gruesome tragedy of his four brothers along with his mother and wife going to their doom."

Bapu was exhausted after this exposition. I said to him, "You have been speaking at some length in the bath today ; is it not desirable to forbear now ?" Bapu said, "I do not strive to live long, but what I speak is but an inseparable part of my ordeal and sacrifice. If I can expound these things to you, and through you to the residents of Birla House and Delhi, and through them to the people of India and ultimately to the whole mankind, perhaps their eyes may be opened and these inhuman acts may stop. Let us be human. That is why I say all this."

I kept quiet. If we argue out, Bapu speaks at

great length to convince us. Today his voice has become very feeble. One has to put one's ear close to Bapu's mouth. He does not have a shave during his fast. He used to have a nap for a few minutes while he was being shaved. That has stopped now.

An amusing dig

After his bath Bapu sat in the sun. He asked me to instruct Sarla in reciting the *Gita*. From 10 to 12 he conferred with Jawaharlal, Mathai, Sanmukham Chetty and Sardar Dada (members of the Cabinet). We chatted with Maniben. She expressed her anxiety for Bapu. Sardar Dada is terribly worried. He asked me to send to him daily reports on Bapu's condition during his stay at Bhavnagar. Karachi is in the grips of panic. 1500 people were killed yesterday. Still no nationalist Muslim has raised his little finger at it.

The local maulanas came at 12.30. With them was one Habibul Rehman who had asked Bapu on the 11th to book their passage to England. Poking fun at them, Bapu said in a grave tone, "Are you not jubilant now? I have managed to book your passage to England, and I will announce that disloyal Muslims of India are going to England." They had, of course, no answer to make to this sharp dig. One of them said, "I withdraw my words if you take offence at them."

Bapu said, "You are employing British tactics—to inflict pain first and then to ask for pardon. You should feel ashamed to say that British rule was superior, which means in effect that it was far better to be slaves and, therefore, we beg the English

to grant us slavery again so that they might protect us against our own brothers. What nonsense is this !

“But now we know what you have been feeling at heart. Think over it ; and be pure and true. If this mentality lasts, how long will Indians tolerate it ?” Bapu paid them back in their own coin.

Mud-plaster was applied at 12.45. Just then we received a telegram from Mridulaben to the effect that the Muslims of Pakistan wanted to know what they were to do to wean Gandhiji from his fast.

Bapu said to me, “If an inquiry is received on the phone, reply that I will touch upon this point in my post-prayer discourse. Of course, my advice to Indian Muslims holds good in the case of Pakistani Muslims also.”

In reply to another inquiry Bapu said, “I am a prisoner of God. I am performing this fast under His orders. It will be ended only when He wishes it. If I come out of this prison alive, I shall get a new lease of life, and then I will go to Pakistan. Otherwise, I will hail death as my friend.” On the whole, Bapu is cheerful today and has attended to all his business. The number of visitors today was legion.

In the evening Bapu went on foot to the prayer-ground and gave a talk. When he came back and lay in bed, he said, “I am feeling refreshed today.” Sushilaben asked Bapu not to walk or speak. But Bapu replied, “I am in the hands of God, not in the hands of anyone else.”

At night many Sikhs and Punjabis came here shouting. They were reproaching Bapu. They can

be pacified if they are given some employment in Delhi, but that is not easy.

Telegrams of sympathy

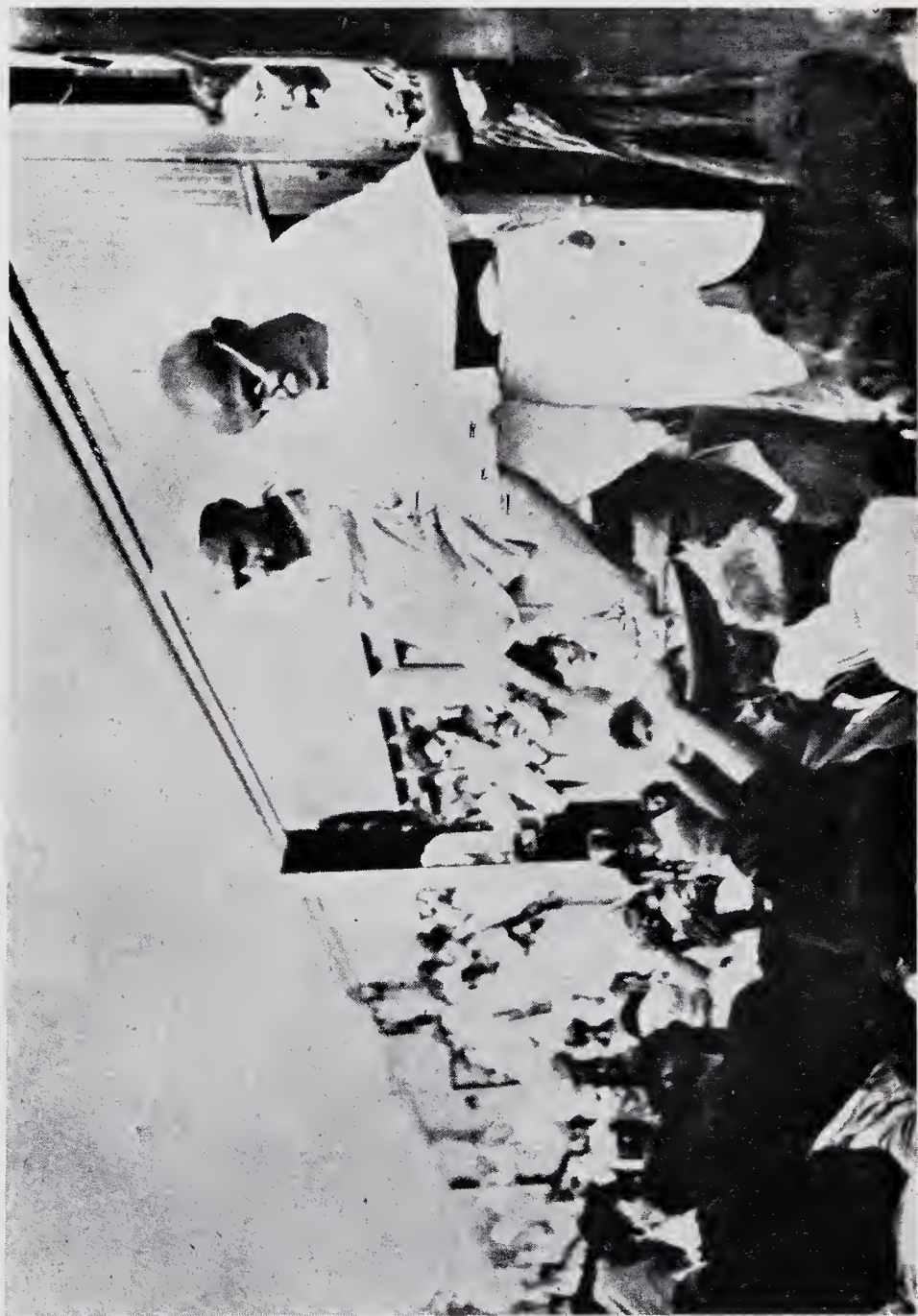
In today's discourse Bapu said, "Telegrams received by me from India and abroad have piled up. Most of the senders have welcomed my decision to go on a fast and have committed me to the care of God. Some people have argued against the fast out of love and have entreated me to give it up. The pile of telegrams is still mounting up. They are from every nation and every country.

"First of all, I am greatly indebted to those brothers and sisters who have expressed their solicitude for me. Some prominent Muslim friends from Lahore in Pakistan have not only expressed anxiety about my condition but have also inquired what help they can render in these circumstances. It gives me pleasure to learn this. As I have already said, this fast is for the purification of my soul. Therefore, those who show sympathy with me in this fast should also purify their souls. Such is my prayer to them.

A few words to Pakistan

"Today I want to address a few words to Pakistan with due respect. I consider Pakistan my friend, and as a friend I must say what I feel.

"The Muslims of Pakistan are guilty of a heinous crime, and murders are still being committed there. Thousands of Hindus and Sikhs are being looted and now the loss is beyond computation. A large number of girls have been abducted. A railway train was looted at Gujranwala in the Punjab. If this goes on in Pakistan, how long will India tolerate it? And



Collecting money for Harijan Fund in Bihar *en route* to Delhi.

after that if a man like myself goes on a fast, or even if hundreds of holy men were to fast, it is certain that the indignation of the people of India would be beyond control. Therefore, the Muslims of Pakistan should think over the question and behave rightly. At the same time they should courageously create confidence among Hindus and Sikhs, dissuade them from leaving Pakistan and protect them at the risk of their own lives. If they do so, Pakistan will really become *pak* or holy. Pakistan should be so holy that every individual living in it shall be as safe as Jinnah Saheb himself is with respect to his life and property. But Pakistan will never do so. And then I will proclaim my regrets for Pakistan which I regard as an evil-doer.

Demand for good behaviour and right conduct

“Today I dare say that Pakistan is a force for evil. I do not like to read the statements and speeches made by Pakistani leaders. I demand from them good behaviour and right conduct, and I wish to live to see this demand fulfilled. If they do so, the people of India will follow the right path on their own.

“I say with shame that today we in India are imitating the evil ways of Pakistan. If these evils take deep root, nobody can imagine what will happen to India in the days to come.

Demand for help in achieving the goal

I have been an advocate of Hindu-Muslim unity since my very boyhood. If the longing which I cherished then is fulfilled in the evening of my life, I will dance for joy like a little child. My desire to

live to an age of 125 years, which is dormant now, will become active again. When my dream of unity comes true, you will enjoy real *swarajya*. Pakistan and India may well remain separate geographically, but their hearts will be united, and the achievement of that goal will usher in an ideal state of bliss for me and for you. I don't want to live for anything short of this achievement. Though alive, I am as good as dead now. Therefore, I appeal to my Muslim friends of Pakistan, who seek my advice, to help me achieve this goal.

God's will be done

"In 1896 I visited the forts at Delhi and Agra. On the gateway of the former there was a couplet which read as follows : 'If there be paradise on earth it is here.' In spite of our glorious past this fort did not seem to me to merit the name of paradise. But if Pakistan proves worthy of our past glory and this couplet could be inscribed on every door there, I should really have infinite satisfaction, whether the paradise were in India or Pakistan. In this paradise there will be no poor man and no capitalist, no millionaire owning a factory and no half-famished labourer. All will get equal wages and earn their bread by the sweat of their brow. All men and women will have equal rights and equal standards of living and, as I have already mentioned, all women other than one's wife will be treated as mothers, sisters and daughters. In such a country there will be no trace of untouchability. People of all castes and creeds will live there in perfect harmony. Whoever listens to, or reads a report of, this blissful dream of mine about the future will for-

give me for being carried away by this rapturous fancy. But I assure all those who doubt whether this dream will come true that I am not at all eager to break my fast early. Foolish and fanciful as I am, I shall not feel at all uneasy if my high hopes do not materialize. I have patience enough to bide my time. But if anybody tries to do me out of my fast, it will only add to my grief. I have started on this fast at the bidding of God and the fast will end only when He wills it. Not a leaf can stir without His will. Nobody has been able to cross His will, nor can anybody do so.

Day's routine and health

Bapu woke up at 3.30. After brushing his teeth he talked for 15 minutes. Read Devadas Kaka's letter while lying in bed, Prayer at 3.45 for half an hour. Drank plain hot water at 4.15. Fell asleep at 5.25. Dictated letters and notes for half an hour. Drank 6 oz. of plain hot water at 7.45. Went for his massage at 8 after taking a foot-bath. Had his massage on the table for 40 minutes and read the paper. Went to the bath at 8.45. Had the paper read to him there. Had a talk with Raj Kumariben and me. Came out of the bath at 9.45. Drank 8 oz. of plain hot water at 9.55. Meeting of the Cabinet from 11 to 12. Drank 8 oz. of plain hot water at 11 and again at 12.10. Read the papers at 12.30, while lying in bed. Had his feet rubbed with *ghee*¹. Saw V. P. Menon at 1.55. Applied mud-plaster at 1.20 and took it off at 2.5. Woke from his nap at 2.25. Drank 8 oz. of plain hot water at 2.50. Dictated letters, lying in

¹ Clarified butter.

bed. Talked with the Maharaja of Patiala at 3.45 and with Gurubachan Singhji at 4.25. Drank 8 oz. of plain hot water at 4.25. Talked with Suchitaben at 4.34 and with Sardar Bhagat Singh at 4.35. Had a talk with Suhrawardi at 4.46. Prayer at 5. Received Meharchand Khanna and the deputation from the Punjab. Talked with Jayaram Dasji and Maniben for 15 minutes. Sardar Sohan Singhji came at 6.20, Ghulam Mohammad Bakshi Saheb at 6.40. Suchitaben at 7.5, Maulana Saheb, Jawaharlalji and Sardar Dada at 7.20. Talked to them till 8.5 while lying in bed. All of them left at 9.10. Raj Kumari-ben came. Went to the bath-room at 9.40 and had his feet pressed. Lay down in bed at 10. Weight was taken at 10. It came to 109 lb., a loss of 2 lb. Bapu's blood pressure has gone up. Sushilaben says that for this reason he feels energetic.

Bapu's hands and feet feel chilly, and his voice has become very feeble. His mental condition is quite sound. We have been here since September. During this period, it is only since yesterday that he has looked quite cheerful and perfectly free from worry. Today he is very happy, because one good result will come about in two days, whatever the circumstances. We pray to Thee, O God, to bestow sanity on all.

Since I have to write all these notes and talk to visitors who come to enquire after Bapu's condition, I am not able to go to bed earlier than 12 or 12.30 these days. Lord Mountbatten's programme for visiting Bikaner was fixed many days in advance, but he has no desire to go there now because of Bapu's fast. A report received last night from Government House says that he has cancelled a state banquet in consideration of Bapu's fast.

Birla Bhawan, New Delhi
15.1.'48

Fast ordained by God

The night passed off well. Bapu woke up at 2 and sat down at night to write his comments on all questions that called for them. He asked Bhai Saheb to switch on the light. Then he asked me to keep lying in bed and get up at prayer time, but the environment was not at all favourable to sleep. When Munnalalji (an inmate of the Ashram) came, Bapu was asleep.

Prayer at 3.30. After the prayer I took Bapu to the inner appartments and sat beside him. I pressed his feet. He resumed the comments which he had started to write at 2.30 ; but while writing he closed his eyes for some time on account of weakness.

Bapu lay down in bed at 7. While talking to Birlaji, he said, "I have undertaken this fast since it has been ordained by God. When I reason with you and other people, my heart says to me, 'O creature of God, why do you reason ? Do you not trust in God ?' If I die and the world is disturbed, it will still be a good thing. Therefore, all of you should give up your worry about me and go about your business. Sardar should have no cause to be sad. It was I who pressed him to go to Bhavnagar. Besides, wherever he goes, it is to help me in my work."

In the end Birlaji said, "You are not inclined to

listen to anybody. But all of us believe that you are in the hands of God.”

At 8.30 Bapu went for massage. His feet were washed in cold water.

Need for inner cleanliness

....has addressed a strong letter to Bapu in which he has poured forth the agony of his mind. He has written to say that if by his withdrawal the entire administration could improve, he would not at all like to stay in the cabinet. In a way, the letter is heart-rending.

Bapu came to the bath, and while he was taking hot bath, Sushilaben read some newspaper cuttings to him. Then Bapu began to dictate to Pyarelalji some questions and their answers which were to be read at the prayer-meeting. Pyarelalji found it difficult to take down notes while Bapu dictated them, because Bapu's voice has become very faint today. Bapu was also feeling giddy in the bath. So I immediately seated him in cold water and held him there. Then he was brought out in the sun, seated in a chair. Today I was alone in the bath and Bapu was feeling giddy ; therefore, I was seized with fright. I beckoned to Sushilaben and with her help I immediately wiped Bapu's body.

At 2 he asked me to prepare an enema. It usually takes 15 to 20 minutes to prepare it, but Bapu got annoyed in the meantime. Then sensing his mistake, he at once said, “Why have I grown so impatient ? I still have this shortcoming. Only when I have got rid of it, I can bring home to the people of my country the need for inner cleanliness. How can I appeal to them till then ? One becomes aware of one's fault only when one has to face a

trial, such as fasting." While saying this, he felt exhausted.

I said, "Bapu, it was my fault. Since the start of your fast I ought to have kept hot water available at all times, whether it was required or not." To this he replied, "No that's not it. I should rather feel sorry to see any waste of fuel. You are not to blame. I ought to have told you half an hour earlier, or I should have waited patiently till the water was ready." I kept quiet, because if I had said one word he would have said four in reply, and it would have wasted his energy.

To Manu

The enema expelled a lot of faeces. Bapu liked it but he was greatly exhausted. Bapu's condition has become so pitiable that even a stony-hearted man will hardly fail to shed tears at it. Besides this, he employs me in particular to do all the odd jobs, such as a bath and the giving of an enema, which cause exhaustion. On such occasions he turns white like a roll of cotton. And if during these operations I get nervous or break down crying, woe be to me ! Even though there are more people here to lend help than there were at Calcutta, somehow or other I feel nervous every minute during this last ordeal. I often wonder whether it will fall to my lot to bear the stigma (of causing his death). When he is lying in bed, he can do all sorts of jobs easily ; but when he moves about he feels giddy and exhausted and turns pale. On such occasions he would not let me summon anybody for help but say, "God will keep me alive if He needs my presence here. I am performing this fast at His bidding. You are my sole

partner in this great sacrifice.” And so on. If God could only give him strength to tide over this most critical time !

After the enema Vidhan Babu and Dr Gilder turned up. Bapu said, “Enema No. 1 has come and enema No. 2 has come.”

A bulletin on Bapu’s health will be published from today. At 4.30 we translated what Bapu had dictated to us to be read at the prayer-meeting. We all went to the prayer-ground. Bapu did not go there. While lying in bed in Birla House, he gave the following talk on the radio-mike in a most feeble voice. This talk was meant to be recorded and broadcast on the radio.

Death is inevitable

“Brothers and sisters, this is a new experience for me. I never had the occasion to address people in this fashion, nor do I like it. I am unable to come to the prayer-ground at this moment. Therefore, if my voice can be heard by the people who have come to prayer and reach the place where you are sitting, you will be comforted and at the same time I shall be gratified. I have dictated what I have to say to you. I do not know whether I shall be in a fit condition to do so tomorrow.

“I pray to you to overlook what others are doing and to practise inner cleanliness to the best of your ability. I believe that if people resort to inner cleanliness on a large scale, it will be good for them as well as for me. It will be beneficial to India, and possibly I may be able to end my fast at an early date. Do not be worried on my account but take care of yourself. Reflect on how far we have ad-

vanced and how far our country can progress. Every human being is destined to die one day. He who is born in this world cannot escape death. Why should we fear death then, and why should we grieve over it? To my mind death is a benign friend to all. It is always worthy of our gratitude, because it relieves us of all sorts of miseries once for all."

Bapu said this much. Then Sushilaben read out the translation of the discourse dictated by Bapu. The written message was as follows :

Answers to Pressmen

"Two hours after the evening prayer yesterday some journalists sent me a note saying that they wanted to ask some questions concerning my discourse. They wanted to meet me. But I had been working the whole day and even after the prayer I was very busy. Being exhausted and run down, I did not feel inclined to see them. I told Pyarelalji to ask them to excuse me and send in their questions to me in writing after 9 in the morning. They have done so."

The first question is this : "You have started on a fast at a time when there is no disturbance in any part of India."

Bapu : "People are systematically and deliberately trying to occupy houses belonging to Muslims. Is this not a trouble? This trouble assumed such proportions that the troops had to use tear-gas much against their will and to fire a round of shots, albeit in the air. Only then the crowd dispersed. It would have been extremely shameful to me to continue to watch the Muslims being driven away in this crafty manner. I call this a slow death by torture."

Fasting against Sardar

Question : "You say that Muslim friends come to you with their tale of panic and insecurity but you have no reply to make to them. They complain that Sardar who is in charge of this department is against Muslims. You also say that Sardar Patel was once your yes-man but he is not so now. This leads people to think that you are undergoing this fast to change Sardar's heart. So your fast is intended to condemn the Home Ministry. It will be good if you clarify this point."

Bapu : "I think I have already given a clear answer to this question. What I have said admits of only one interpretation. The interpretation now put upon it is beyond my comprehension. If I had known that it could be interpreted in this way, I would have already clarified the point.

"Many Muslim friends had complained that the attitude of Sardar was hostile to Muslims. I was rather sorry to hear it, but I did not clarify the point. After the fast had begun I broke loose from the self-restraint I had imposed on me. Therefore, I told the critics that they would not gain anything by placing Sardar on a different footing from myself and Pandit Nehru and by unnecessarily lauding me and Nehru to the skies. There is a certain roughness in Sardar's way of conversation which sometimes annoys people. But Sardar does not mean to annoy anybody. He has a large heart, which is charitable to all. So what I said was intended to acquit my life-long faithful companion of an unjust accusation. I did fear that the listeners might be led to think that I regarded Sardar as my

yes-man. It was out of love that Sardar was called my yes-man ; therefore, while complimenting him I said that he was so powerful and strong-willed that he could never be a yes-man to anybody. When he was called my yes-man, he did not object to it, because he has a magnanimous mind which easily accepted what I said.

In defence of Sardar

“Sardar gave proofs of his high ability in administering the affairs of Ahmedabad Municipality. But he was so humble that he put himself under my tutelage to receive training in politics. For this, he gave me the following reason. When I came back to India he did not feel any inclination to take part in the administrative system obtaining at that time. But when administrative responsibility was thrown upon him, he found that the methods of non-violence, which he had been following so far, could no longer be used. I said I had found out that what I and my comrades had called non-violence was not the real stuff. That was a fake which may be called ‘mild resistance’ ! Of course, mild resistance can prove fruitful if practised by certain people. You can well think that if a weak man becomes a representative of the people, he can only bring ridicule and dishonour on the heads of his masters. I know Sardar can never prove false to the responsibility entrusted to him. He can never countenance a fall from that position of responsibility.

Man is himself responsible for his degradation

“I hope that after listening to this talk no one will entertain the idea that my fast is a slur upon the Home Ministry. If anybody believes so, I would

say to him that he is degrading himself and doing harm to himself, not to me or Sardar. I have already stated in forceful words that no external influence can degrade a man but it is he who can degrade himself. I know that this sentence has no bearing on my answer, but it is a universal truth and will hold good on every occasion.

“I have already said in clear terms that I have undertaken this fast for the sake of the Muslims of India ; and, therefore, it is against the Hindus and Sikhs of India and the Muslims of Pakistan. Thus, this fast is also intended to restore peace in Pakistan. I shall now try to put briefly what I have already stated.

“Imperfect and insignificant as I am, my fast cannot help in fully preserving peace in both the countries against all sorts of dangers. The fast is intended for the inner cleanliness of all men. It would be wrong to have any doubts about the real nature of the fast.”

Fast intended to drive away madness

Question : “Your fast has come off at a time when the Security Council of the UNO is about to meet. At the same time riots have taken place in Karachi recently. We do not know how these events have figured in the foreign press. There is no doubt that these events have sunk into insignificance beside your fast. From the previous pronouncements of Pakistani leaders we can surmise that they will take advantage of this situation and will proclaim to the world that Gandhiji has undertaken this fast in order to wean his Hindu followers who have imperilled the

lives of the Muslims in India from their madness. It will take some time for the truth to reach all parts of the world, and in the meantime your fast can have the effect of prejudicing the UNO against us."

Bapu : "This question calls for a detailed answer but I will be brief. From what I can see I dare say that the effect of my fast on the governments and the peoples of the world has been salutary. Foreigners who can view Indian events dispassionately will not misconstrue my fast. The fact is that this fast is intended to wean the people of India and Pakistan from their madness."

"Unless Muslim rule in Pakistan is conducted on right lines and the men and women of Pakistan learn to behave well, the Muslims of India cannot be protected. But I am happy to infer from Mridulaben's report that Pakistani Muslims have realized their mistake and awakened to a sense of their responsibility."

"The UNO knows that my fast will help it come to a right decision, so that it can offer proper guidance to Pakistan and India."

Naturally people were eager to have a glimpse of Bapu after the prayer. Bapu's bed was taken out in the verandah. First the women and then the men passed by the bed and had a look at Bapu. Bapu was asleep at that time. His face looked serene, radiant and piteous. This skeleton of a man is straining every nerve and crying for unity for the good of mankind, but people do not heed him. Bapu woke up in a little while and greeted the visitors with folded hands as he lay in bed. This was a touching sight.

After dinner we sat by Kaki. Everyone asks me to write to him or her every day about Bapu's health. But I am feeling very uneasy, since in Delhi there is no change for the better. At Calcutta every one realized his responsibility on the first day of the fast. The future must always be uncertain.

State of health and the day's routine

Bapu passed urine at 2.30 in the night. Did his writing work, lying in bed. Cleaned his teeth at 3.30 and got ready for prayer. Prayer at 4.30. Took 8 oz. of plain hot water ; dictated notes to Pyarelalji. Fell asleep at 6.30 and woke at 7.15. Sat up against a pillow at 7.35. Took 8 oz. of hot water at 7.42. Had newspapers read to him. Had a talk with Ghanshiamdassji Birla about his fast from 7.55 to 8.5. Sat up in bed at 8.35. Has to be supported when he sits up. Passed urine at 8.40. Got ready for massage at 8.45. Took 8 oz. of hot water and foot-bath while sitting on the massage table. Rajkumariben came. Dr Jivaraj, Dr Vidhan Babu and Dr Sushilaben examined him. Bapu walked to the bath at 9.10. (He had walked to the massage table also.) Did not evacuate faeces, nor did he pass urine. Felt giddy in the bath. Sat in a chair. Came out of the bath at 10.40. Weight 107 lb. and blood pressure 98/100. Panditji was present at that time and the weight was taken by him. Took 8 oz. of plain hot water at 10.45. Jawaharlalji left at 11.15. The local maulanas came. Maulanas Hifzul Rehman and Habibul Rehman and Dr Jafri were here for 18 minutes and left at 11.33. Had a talk with Pandit

Sunderlal at 11.35. Goswami Gancsh Datt came at 12.15. Had telegrams read to him while he lay in bed. Had a massage with *ghee*. Dictated his discourse to Sushilaben. V. T. Krishnamachari, Kasturbhai, Lalbhai and Ghanshiamdasji and Brijmohanji Birla came just then. They came just to see Bapu. Had a nap at 12.45 and woke at 1.10. Drank 8 oz. of hot water at 1.35. Took an enema at 2.45. Talked to me. Applied mud-plaster at 3 and took it off at 4. Took 8 oz. of plain hot water at 4. Dr Vidhan Babu, Shankar Raoji, Acharya Jugal Kishoreji, Kher Saheb, the Maharaja of Devas, Rajendra Babu, his wife and children, Khurshid Ahmed Rugar and his wife, Tokile, the Swiss Minister, and Dr Gilder came. Dr Jivaraj Kaka is a strict gate-keeper. Nobody can come in without his permission, and everyone who is admitted has to promise not to speak to Bapu.

Bapu could not go to the prayer-ground. He spoke on the radio, lying in bed. Sushilaben read out Bapu's message. Then all men and women quietly filed past Bapu and went away after having a look at him. Bapu had a nap for 15 minutes. Took 8 oz. of hot water at 5.50. Shahnewaz Saheb came. Bapu took a nap from 6.15 to 7.55. Devadas Kaka and Kaki came at 7. Jairamdasji, Rajkumariben, Jawaharlalji, Niyogi and Sanmukham Chetty also came. A meeting was held till 9.10. Drank 4 oz. of plain hot water at 8. Passed urine at 9.45 and then walked to his bed.

The total intake of water was 68 oz. and the discharge of urine was only 28 oz. This gives an idea of the state of his health. All are worried because he does not pass urine in the ratio of the in-

take of water, Bapu's weight ordinarily used to be in the neighbourhood of 108 lb., but after the fast at Calcutta it sometimes went up to 111 or 112 lb. This is because some water is retained in the system owing to a disorder in the kidneys.

Birla Bhawan, New Delhi

16.1.'48

Memories of boyhood

Prayer at 3.30 as usual. Bapu suddenly got up by himself for prayer. After the prayer he walked, as on other days, to the inner living room. We wrapped Bapu and sat by his side. Bapu said, "Why did Munnalal (an inmate of the Ashram) not come to the prayer today? Did he not sleep here? Kalyanam (the typist) too was not present. Did he go to bed late?"

...said, "He always goes to bed late. If he has no other business, he sits down to write Gujrati.

Bapu said, "I did not know that he had become as great as Jawahar. At Calcutta he used to sleep by my side along with these girls. If he gets up at 3.30, why does he not come to the prayer? Perhaps it is my fault. Otherwise, after having come here with great interest, why should he not participate in the prayer, important as the programme is?" Bapu was exhausted while speaking. He kept quiet for two minutes. Then he turned to us and said, "All of you must go to bed now." That is how Bapu cares for us all.

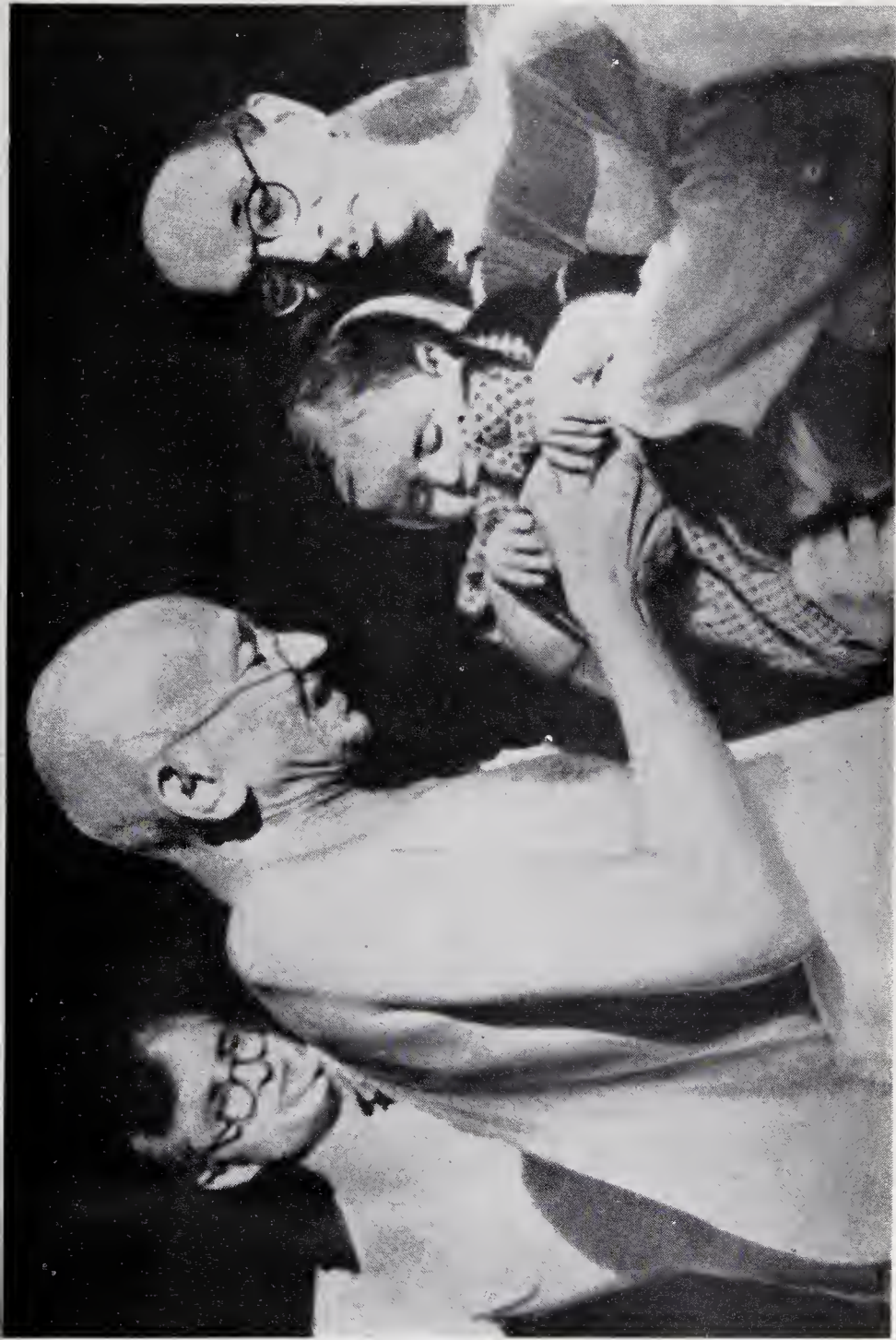
Bapu woke up at 7. He had the papers read to him. Then he slept for an hour. A press telegram intended to be sent was not despatched. Bapu was angry at this. For 15 minutes he commented on it

in great distress, "It smacks of untruth. But I don't say you alone do so. That is the way of the world. I do not say this to pin-point your fault. I have also made similar excuses in my boyhood and in England." Then he referred to the two vows he made to his mother, namely, abstinence from meat-eating and fidelity to his wife. In the end he said, "I said all this because I felt revived in spirits. Thanks be to God. If I can bear up like this, I shall survive for many more days. Meanwhile, if people fight among themselves, I shall die ; and if they are unified I shall live. By 'unification' I mean that, when Muslims come back from Pakistan, they should forget the wrongs done to them by Hindus and affirm that the people are not divided despite the partition of the country."

Bapu was carried in a chair for his massage. He did not have his feet washed. He was medically examined ; he is certainly getting weaker. At 9.45 he went to the bath. He fell down there and a cold wet towel was placed over his head. Henceforth two of us must accompany him to the bath. Brother and I helped him and later Sushilaben joined us. Bapu said that he did not feel giddy as he did the day before. He felt better, perhaps because his head was kept cool. His weight was taken and it was found to be 107 lb., because water is retained in his system.

Payment of fifty-five crores decided on

The local Muslims reported an improvement in the state of the city. Bapu said, "Give careful thought to whatever you do and say no more than what you



Fondling Pyarelal's niece.

actually do. Do nothing to flatter me.” Bapu said he felt much better than he was the day before.

It is reported that the cabinet has decided to pay 55 crores of rupees to Pakistan.

Today I prepared the enema well before time so that it might be given as soon as Bapu wanted it, and in fact he asked for it just at 2.

We spent nearly the whole day with Bapu. At 4 we moved to another room to translate his speech. Birlaji said, “We cannot get a satisfactory response to today’s speech. Whatever is being done is meant to flatter Bapu. I have plainly told Bapu that I wear khadi just to please him. I have no faith in khadi. If I had that faith, I should not be running a mill.”

Meetings are being held in different quarters of the city. Today Sushilaben and I sat down to translate Bapu’s discourse at prayer time, and so we were late by five minutes in arriving at the meeting, but the prayer had already been started by other people.

Clarification of the objective of the sacrifice

After the prayer Bapu spoke lying in bed. His words spoken on the mike were audible over the prayer-ground. Bapu made the following speech :

“Brothers and sisters, I did not expect to be able to speak to you today. You will be pleased to know that I feel greater animation in my voice than I did before. This cannot but mean that God has been very merciful to me. On the fourth day I never felt so much vitality during any of my former fasts as I do today. I hope that if all of you continue to strive for inner purification, I may

conserve to the end my ability to speak. I would like to say that I am in no hurry. Hurry cannot lead us to our objective. I have perfect peace of mind. I do not wish that things half done may be represented to me as fully accomplished. When the task we have set before us is accomplished in toto, its desired effect will be felt all over India. Therefore, I would cease to have any interest in life if peace were not established all around us, over the whole of India and over the whole of Pakistan. This is the meaning of this sacrifice."

Bapu spoke this much. His voice was very feeble, and it appeared that he was having difficulty in getting breath after every word.

Step taken by India

Sushilaben read out the remaining speech which is given below :

"It is not easy for any responsible government to go back on a decision which they have taken after careful deliberation. But our Government, which is in every sense of the term a responsible government, has changed its decision quickly after due consideration. It should be congratulated on it by the whole country from Kashmir to Cape Comorin and from Karachi to the borders of Assam.

"I think that all the peoples of the world will admit that only a large-hearted government like ours could take such a big step. This has not been done to appease the Muslims. It is for its own satisfaction. No government commanding the confidence of a very large section of the population would take any step to make itself the laughing-stock of senseless people. When madness is rampant all around,

should not the topmost leaders who are steering the ship of the state with a cool head and great courage save it from sinking ?

“Why did our Government take this step ? The reason for it was my fast. The fast changed their whole outlook. Without the fast they would have simply followed the law of the land. This measure of the Indian Government will promote friendship and goodwill in the real sense of the term. It will also put Pakistan to the test.

“It should also effect an honourable settlement of not only the Kashmir dispute but all other disputes between India and Pakistan. Today’s hostility will give place to friendship. Justice will supersede law.

“A homely saying in English has it that where the common law fails justice comes to our aid. Not long ago there were separate courts of law and justice in England.

“Viewed from this angle, the Indian Government has undoubtedly done the right thing. If a precedent were needed the Macdonald Award is before us. That settlement was arrived at not only by Macdonald but by the whole British Cabinet and the majority of the members of the Second Round Table Conference. But my fast in Yeravda Jail changed that decision overnight. I have been asked to advise the Government of India how to implement their great decision in the best possible manner.

No fear of death

“I know that the more my fast is prolonged, the more worry it causes the doctors who

attend me of their own free will and at great personal inconvenience. My kidneys do not function properly. The doctors do not fear that I may die any day but what they fear is that my system may be permanently damaged if the fast is prolonged.

“But, however efficient the doctors may be, I did not undertake this fast on their advice. It is God who has always been my sole guide and physician. He never errs. He is almighty. If He has any more use for my frail body, He will save me in spite of what the doctors may say. I have this faith, because I am in the hands of God. I may assure you that I fear neither death nor the life of a cripple.

“But I fancy that, if I can be of any use to the country, people should work together and speedily for the common good in the face of the doctors’ warning. We must be brave after achieving freedom through a tremendous struggle. Brave men put their trust even in those whom they suspect to be their enemies. They consider that distrust is beneath their dignity. My vow will be redeemed if the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs of Delhi are able to maintain peace in Delhi, even when there are outbursts of violence in other parts of India and Pakistan.

Friendship is imperative

Fortunately people in India as well as Pakistan have come to realize that by far the best response to the fast is that the two counterparts should develop such friendly relations that people on either side may cross the border without any danger and settle where they like irrespective of their religion. This is the *sine qua non* of inner cleanliness.

It will not be right to throw the whole onus of maintaining peace in India and Pakistan on Delhi. People living in other parts of India are no less than human beings. Our Government has taken a most generous step for the sake of all people without any consideration of the costs involved. How will Pakistan respond to it? Where there's a will, there's a way. But has it the will?"

Bapu was abed when the prayer finished. People marched past him in a bee-line to have a look at him, as they did yesterday. Bapu was then having a talk with C. H. Bhabha.

I might as well take arsenic

Bapu could not pass urine. Therefore, Maulana Saheb had the temerity to say, "What if you take a little *mausambi* juice with water?"

Bapu said, "I simply cannot take it. I might as well take arsenic instead of *mausambi* juice. I can take nothing except lemon juice. I have known for some time that there is some disorder in my body. But Rama's name is not an inefficacious remedy."

Birlaji said, "You look better this time than you did during other fasts. This is due to your living in Delhi."

Bapu said, "No, it is due to my repeating the name of Rama."

Today Bapu is not relishing water. His health is causing anxiety.

Some Hindus and Sikhs came to see Bapu, but their talk did not impress him. Jawaharlalji, Jaiprakashji, Suchitaben and others reported that

the situation had improved and many meetings were being held.

Bapu said to Lohiaji, "All of you must work for peace with a sincere heart. I am not going to die easily. But whatever you do must be substantial."

At 9 Bapu walked to his bed. Doetors have advised an hourly test of his urine.

State of Health

Bapu woke up at 3.30 a.m. Brushed his teeth and said his prayers. Passed urine at 3.35. Drank 8 oz. of plain hot water. Dictated a letter to. . . Dozed off at 7, but had a comfortable sleep at 7.15. Woke up at 8.10. Had a talk and practised writing Bengalee. Had the massage at 8.45. The doetors examined him. His blood pressure was 170/100. Went to the bath at 9.40. His bowels did not move. Passed urine. Took a hot bath, and applied a cold compress to his head. Sat in a tub of cold water. Did not feel giddy. Came out of the bathroom at 10.30. Had his weight taken ; it came to 107 lb. Took 8 oz. of plain hot water at 10.35. Had a talk with Ghanshiamdasji Birla for 10 minutes. Desh-bandhu Guptaji came at 10.40. Rajendralalji came at 10.55. Read the paper at 11, lying in bed. Goswami Ganesh Dattji and the princees of Dholpur, Nabha and Panna came at 11.5 just to have a glimpse of Bapu. Had *ghee* rubbed on the feet from 12 to 1. Cardiographie examination by Dr Dhanda at 2.20. Took 8 oz. of plain hot water. Maulana Hifzul Rehman, Ahmad Saiyed, Dr Jafri and S. S. Abdullah came. Applied mud-plaster at 1.40 and took it off at 1.55. Took 8 oz. of plain hot water at 2. Jawaharlalji came at 1.20 and left at 1.55.

Mridulaben was with him for 10 minutes at 2. Took the enema at 2.20 ; had a clear motion. Maulana Saheb, Jaiprakashji, Prabhavatiben and Hoshiariben (an inmate of the Ashram) came. Took plain hot water at 3.45. Dictated notes to Sushilaben, lying in bed. Took hot water at 4.40. Shankaranji put wet and hot compresses on the abdomen and kidneys to draw out urine but without success. Prayer at 5. Moved to the inner apartment after it. The prayer was so arranged that Bapu was able to listen to it lying in bed. Had a ten minutes' talk with Bhabha at 5.50. Took 8 oz. of plain hot water at 6. Had a talk for 15 minutes with Goswami Ganesh Dattji and 35 other people from the Punjab and Delhi. Jawaharlalji, Jairamdasji and Rajkumari-ben came at 6.20. Had talks with Jawaharlalji for 15 minutes and with Rajkumariben for 10 minutes and later with Kher Saheb and the Maharaja of Faridkot. Lay down in bed at 7.10. Took 8 oz. of plain hot water with 10 grams of citrate at 8.10. Shankar Raoji and Ram Manohar Lohia came at 8. Suchitaben and Shahnewaz Saheb came at 8.10. Lay down in bed at 9. Had an oil massage. The day passed in this manner.

Bapu is not feeling well. His heart is not functioning properly. Perhaps he may reach a critical stage tonight. God's will is supreme.

Sikh delegation

Bapu had the following conversation with Goswami Ganesh Dattji and the Sikh delegation which came with him yesterday at 7 p.m. Goswamiji said, "The improvement in the situation that has been visible during the last two days is the result of your

penance. These people are at your service. Invoking God as their witness by word and deed, we take a pledge to live in amity and not to allow any breach of peace. The chief of R.S.S. of Karol Bagh is also here. Please end your fast now."

Bapu : "Give to me in writing what you are orally saying and put your signatures on it. This is all I have to say."

Atmasinghji (Sikh) : "It is our good fortune that you were born in this country. We will maintain peace at the cost of our lives and will never bear this disgrace. Whatever services you demand of us are at your disposal."

Bapu : "You ask me to end the fast, but I shall not end it in a casual manner. Many people approach me with this request. You will have to wait patiently for some time. If God wants to preserve my life, nobody can put an end to it. I do not feel like giving up the fast. I do take water if nothing else. And water is a great nourishment in itself if one can tolerate it. I am resting here quietly. I don't want to pursue the matter further."

Birla Bhawan, New Delhi
17.1.'48

Do not waste time

Prayer at 3.30 as usual. Before the prayer Bapu cleaned his teeth, etc. as on other days. After the prayer he walked to his room. He said, "I feel more energy today than I did yesterday. I eat a lot more than you people do. There is a sort of nourishment in water."

Shankaranji, Hoshiariben and Munnalalji were sitting in the inner room with their limbs stretched out. So Bapu said, "They look like *maharishis*¹." To Hoshiariben he said, "Never sit idle. You must be doing something or the other."

Bapu asked us to go to bed, because we have to keep awake at night. He was in a cheerful mood this morning. He dictated a letter to Richard and then went off to sleep. Ghanshiambdasji came at 8. Bapu talked to him with gusto.

Ghanshiambdasji : "I have to go to Bombay. Just as Yamaraj² blessed Savitri with the birth of sons, even so you bless me so that my words may come true."

Bapu : "God alone is without blemish. During

¹ Great sages.

² God of Death who brought Savitri's dead husband back to life and showered many blessings on her including the birth of one hundred sons.

other fasts I had the feeling that they might end early enough. At Calcutta too I had the same feeling. But I always hold firm to my vow and never break it. I then felt that somebody would bring a favourable report and my fast would end. But on this occasion I do not feel that way. If I could end the fast, I should be happy ; after all there is no pleasure in performing a fast. But now I do not feel that Ghanshiamdass may come with a report that may end my fast. Mridula was here and asked me what course of action she was to follow in the Punjab. I said to her, 'Tell the people there that the fast cannot be ended in this way. Make them realize that if they behave properly, others will follow suit. Delhi, in particular, has to be purged of evil. If we can do away with police protection in Delhi, restoration of peace in the country will be easy enough. All business in India has come to a standstill. I possess unfailing patience. I can go through a lot of work. I have just dictated an article for the *Harijan*.'

Ghanshiamdassji : "I had a talk with Randhawa (I. G. P.) yesterday. He told me that the situation in Delhi had appreciably improved since yesterday."

Bapu : "Tell Randhawa to look at things with an unbiased mind. He will then rise in the estimation of the people. All people suspect that he has a prejudiced mind. I cannot say how far it is true."

Birlaji : "Today it is difficult to say that any person is free from prejudice. There is prejudice in my mind too. I am overwhelmed with grief, because the Pakistanis curse us so vehemently and

loudly that we cannot bear it. We have lost faith in them. We cannot think rightly in our anger."

Bapu : "The Punjabis are not free from prejudice either."

Birlaji : "Qurban Ali's . . . of today does not smack of prejudice. Communalism does not promote even one's own interests. One can understand this by careful reflection, not in anger."

Bapu : "That is right. You should also ponder over it. A fast is an undesirable thing but it is yielding dividends. If I give up the fast, we should expect no more dividends."

Birlaji : "I say what I am feeling in my heart of hearts. This feeling easily comes to an afflicted heart. We can succeed by acting in this way. Inner cleanliness leads us on to progress."

Bapu : "Progress is possible only when we ourselves have achieved perfect cleanliness."

Birlaji : "And cleanliness is possible only when we are in the flesh."

Bapu : "I feel that my body is not going to dissolve yet. According to doctors a reduction in the quantity of urine passed and a greater proneness to sleep is not good for health. And if I do not sleep at all, they disapprove of it either. But what a great reliance I place upon God ! If I remember God from my heart, my kidneys will begin to function properly by themselves."

Birlaji : "I don't have the heart to leave this place. I ought to stay here. Yesterday, at the instance of Shiyama Prasad, I made up my mind to go because I had promised to go. But Sardar's face—that resolute man's face—fell on hearing it, and so he asked me on the phone to come if I possibly

could. Being grief-stricken, he asked me why the fast was still continuing. I told him that I wanted to stay in Delhi, though the fast was not likely to be prolonged."

Cleanliness of mind is a great asset

Bapu : "This was the one thing of which Pakistan could take undue advantage. India has risen in world estimation by paying 55 crores. If the Pakistanis are still bent on fighting, even a child can understand that they are waging war with the help of India's money. After all how long will they fight ?

"You may go, since Brijmohan is staying here and our work will go on as before. Wherever you go, you will carry on the work of cleansing there too. Do not hesitate. Cleansing of minds is in itself a great job."

Birlaji : "It is God who does everything. Everything moves of itself. But man thinks that it is he who keeps things going."

Birlaji alluded to the legend of Nachiketa and Yamaraj and said, "Nachiketa was fasting at Yamaraj's doorstep, and so Yamaraj was at a loss to know what to do. Just imagine how one at whose door a *mahatma* is fasting will be puzzled !"

As this conversation was going on, Rajkumari-ben came, and the conversation came to a stop. During the massage Vidhan Babu, Dr Jivaraj Kaka, Colonel Dr Dhanda and others examined Bapu. They said, "If Bapu takes two ounces of orange juice, it will do him a power of good. The situation in the city has also improved now."

Bapu said, "If I take orange juice, I shall have

to fast for 21 days more." Sushilaben did not agree to the proposal and said, "If orange juice were forced upon Bapu, he might start on a fast unto death."

Bapu went to the bath at 10.30. Brother and I helped him in taking a bath. Sushilaben came there and wanted Bapu's permission to ask Birlaji for the loan of the room in which a certain European, Richard by name, who was suffering from typhoid, was staying under the care of Bapu. Bapu said, "We cannot occupy any more rooms." Bapu came out in the sun at 10.45. Sushilaben was sometimes too busy to measure or test Bapu's urine, but Bapu reminded her from time to time.

Happy signs

The local maulanās came. They reported, "The situation in the city has considerably improved. Those Muslims who had fled India and settled in Karachi have wired to us, wishing us success and inquiring when they could come to India, restless as they were to come back."

Bapu said, "That augurs well for the future. If they could come and live in Delhi I would regard it as a good test case."

The mud-plaster was applied at 12. After that preparations were made for the enema. Bapu took the enema. There was not much evacuation of faeces today. Compresses of cold and hot water were applied. Maulana Saheb came. He said that the fast must be ended by the evening, since the situation in the city had improved considerably. Bapu has laid down a seven-point programme. The fast can be ended if all affix their signatures to it. Bapu is extremely restless today.

A crown of thorns

The shopmen of Subzi Mandi came. They said, "We had stopped selling fruit to Muslims at our shops, but from today our shops will be open to all who may require fruit."

At that time a piteous scene came to view. I cursed myself for not being a painter or a photographer. Jawaharlalji came at that time. A stream of tears flowed down his face to see Bapu's restlessness in body and mind. He quietly turned his face in another direction to hide his tears and to wipe them. Surely, he could not bear to see under his own aegis in free India this miserable condition of one who had led India to freedom. The scene was so touching that it beggars description. His was really 'a crown of thorns'.

Mind is the fountain-head

Bapu began to dictate his discourse at 4. He moved into the inner apartment at 4.30. Rajendra Babu came. The following conversation took place. Bapu said, "Give me a complete list of the representatives. I will announce their names. To me oral statements have no value. I recognize only written statements. What if the refugees who come from there are killed on the way? If they can come to Delhi, why can they not go to other places? If Pakistan does not grant passports to Muslims, what worse can they do? If people in Pakistan have gone mad, need we follow their example? If I am destined to die, I must die. Doctors cannot know the ordinary workings of the human mind. Mind is the fountain-head. Nobody should worry about me. We have only to see that we are following the

right course and that we are cleansing our hearts. This fast is meant to awaken us. Surely Dr Vidhan is at his wits' end. He has admitted it to Maulana. But I do not want that anybody should deceive himself in order to persuade me to end my fast. In that case things will go from bad to worse."

After this we translated the post-prayer discourse. Prayer was offered at 5. All the leaders are now engaged in bringing round the different groups, and meetings are being held. Being the President of the Congress, Rajendra Babu is so overworked and worried that his own health is breaking down. But he is a staunch follower of Bapu. Since Bapu does not entertain any arguments, Rajendra Babu will have rest only when he has achieved success.

The fifth day

At 8 Bapu listened to the prayer, lying in bed. Then he gave the following talk for three minutes in a whisper.

"Brothers and Sisters, by the grace of God I am able to say a few words to you without much effort on this fifth day of my fast. I have dictated what I have to say and Sushilaben will read it to you at the prayer-meeting.

"I only want to say that any declaration you make must have the courage of your convictions. If not, your declarations are worthless. You will make a grievous blunder if your declarations are influenced by the thought of preserving my life. It is not within anybody's power to save my life or to end it. It is only in the power of God. I do not doubt it, nor should anybody else.

The rules of non-violence

This fast is meant to awaken people and to cleanse their hearts. They should struggle to achieve that end. In it lies the good of all. Do not do anything out of pity for me. I will continue my fast for as many days as I can. If God wills, I shall die. I know that many of my friends are distressed and they ask me to end the fast even today. But today I see no reason for ending it. If I can find a reason I will not hesitate to give up the fast. It is a law of non-violence that we should honour our word, give up arrogance and learn to be humble. I am not saying this in arrogance but out of pure love."

During the talk Bapu's increasing exhaustion was clearly audible on the mike. The written message broadcast after this was as follows :

The objective of a spiritual fast

"I have stated it before and repeat it today that people say many things under the pressure of the fast and forget them when the fast is over. If this happens, it will be highly undesirable. It should not just happen. A spiritual fast has only one objective and it is the cleansing of hearts. If people honestly cleanse their hearts, the circumstance which occasioned it may disappear but the cleansing will not. We whitewash our room in honour of the arrival of a dear one, but the whitewashing does not disappear when he is gone. This is an instance of a material thing. After some time the wash gradually disappears and it has to be done over again. But the cleanliness of heart, if once done, lasts till death. There is no worthier objective of a fast.



Having a walk with Authoress in Noakhali.

True feelings

“Telegrams from princes and common people are piling up. From Pakistan also telegrams are pouring in. This is good so far as it goes, but as a friend and well-wisher of Pakistan I would like to say to the people and builders of Pakistan that, if they do not awake to a sense of their responsibility and do not admit their guilt, they will not be able to maintain the integrity of Pakistan. This does not mean that I do not desire that the two divisions of India should come together again of their own free will. But I wish to make it clear that I cannot even think that their unification should be effected by force. I hope that these words spoken from my death-bed will not offend anybody.

“I also hope that all Pakistanis will understand that I shall be untrue to myself and to them if through my own weakness or through fear of hurting their feelings I do not put before them my true feelings. If I am wrong in my estimate, they must tell me. I promise to take back my words if I am proved wrong. But so far as I can judge there cannot be two opinions about the guilt of Pakistan.

Inner voice

“People should not read any political motive in my fast. I have undertaken it as a duty in obedience to the strong call of my inner voice. I decided to perform this fast after suffering a good deal of agony. The Muslim friends of Delhi will bear me out. Their representatives come to me almost every day to give the day’s report. If the princes, Hindus, Sikhs and others deceive me in order to wean me from this fast, they will not be serving their

own interests nor the interests of India. They should understand well that I am never so happy as when I undertake a fast for the purification of my soul. During this fast I have experienced greater happiness than ever before. Nobody need put an obstruction in my way. An obstacle can be put only when you can honestly say that you have turned away from Satan and are on the path to God."

After the prayer, while the women were retiring peacefully after having a look at Bapu, the men folk created disorder. They began to push and jostle one another. Today there was an immense crowd. All of us acted as volunteers. The women, holding each other's hands, threw a cordon round Bapu and we mounted guard.

Hindus and Muslims are brothers

When order was restored, Bapu was taken to his room from the verandah. Since Bapu was not passing urine, Sushilaben suggested cupping, but Bapu did not approve of it. He said, "I know what affection you have for me. Let come what may. Leave me alone." Sushilaben said, "This is after all a suspicion."

Bapu said, "Such things bring about a man's degradation. I think that mud-plasters and baths too are unnecessary. I want to give up these also."

In the evening a crowd of nearly one lac of people collected. They were raising the slogans : 'Hindus and Muslims are brothers ! Long live Gandhiji !' We went out to see the crowd. The people were divided into two parties. One party

shouted 'Bhai-bhai'¹ and the other 'Stab ! Kill !' They started quarrelling. We moved to the verandah. Panditji made an inspiring and touching speech in his own characteristic way.

At 7 Lord and Lady Mountbatten came. Seeing them, Bapu greeted them with folded hands with great difficulty, and said in a very low voice, "It takes a fast to bring you to me."

They had a hearty talk. But Bapu can break the fast only when his seven conditions are fulfilled.

All will lay down their lives

Bapu is more restless today. He asked us to sing a hymn. He wanted to listen to the song 'O my soul, repeat the name of Shri Ramchandra the merciful' and also to the 12th chapter of the *Gita*. The latter was also read to him. After this he had a talk with Jayaramdasji for two minutes.

At 9 he lay down in bed. He was given a massage with oil. Today Rajendra Babu is remonstrating with the people in a most earnest manner. Bapu had directed us to wake him up whenever a message was received from Rajendra Babu. When Pyarelalji came, Bapu was fast asleep. He said : "All have agreed to sign the seven conditions laid down by Bapu, and if anything happened to the contrary they would all sacrifice their lives." But Bapu asked us to be patient and went off to sleep.

From today's situation it can be inferred that Bapu's fast will not be prolonged. Perhaps the fast

¹ We are brothers.

may be broken tomorrow morning. But our anxiety is growing every moment.

Being very restless today, Bapu said in his sleep, "Let me now lie down in bed." He had to spit very frequently during the night.

State of health and the day's routine

Bapu woke up at 3.30. Cleaned his teeth and passed urine. Said his prayer and then dictated notes to Sushilaben. Read letters received from the Ashram. Took 8 oz. of plain hot water at 4.30. Got to sleep at 5.24. Woke up at 6.55. Talked to Mridulaben, lying in bed. Got up at 7.20. Cleaned his nose. Then started dictating letters to Bishan Bhai and finished at 7.45. Took 8 oz. of plain hot water at 7.25. Got to sleep after 7.45 and woke up at 8.35. Had a talk with Ghanshiamsdasji and Brijmohanji Birla. Rajkumariben came at 8.55. Took 8 oz. of plain hot water at 9. Got up for the massage. Vidhan Babu, Dr Jivaraj Kaka, Colonel Dr Daddha and Sushilaben examined him at 9.15. Blood pressure recorded 184/104. After the massage, went to bath at 10.35. Finished his bath at 11.5. Weight was taken. It came to 107 lb. Took 8 oz. of plain hot water at 11.7. Nawab Sahyamin and Nawab Sidaqat Ali Khan came at 11.27. Padma Singhji came at 11.38. Application of mud-plaster and massage with *ghee* at 11.45. Took off the mud-plaster at 12.30. Women from Bahawalpur, Ram Manohar Lohia and Basudeva Khanna came with one thousand signatures. Took 8 oz. of plain hot water at 1.45. Passed urine at 2.28. Blood taken for examination at 2.45. Maulana Saheb, Bardoloi and Virandevi came at 2.50. Took 8 oz. of hot water with

citrate at 3. Jawaharlalji came at 3.5. Got up to pass urine at 3.30. Went to the inner apartment and got to sleep at 4.40. Took 8 oz. of hot water at 4.50. Talked to us at 5, lying in bed. His voice was very feeble. Took 8 oz. of plain hot water with a few drops of lemon juice at 5.50. After that Rajendra Babu, Shankar Raoji and Satyanarayan Sinha came. Passed urine. Took 8 oz. of hot water with a few drops of lemon juice at 8.35. Before that Arthur Moore, Kidwai, his brother's wife and his daughters and others had come. Randhawa came at 6:55. Jawaharlalji had come at 6.30. Lord and Lady Mountbatten came at 7.5. Listened to a hymn and the 12th chapter of the *Gita* at 8.35. Lay down in bed at 9. Had a massage with oil. All the time he was growing more and more restless.

Birla Bhawan, New Delhi
18.1.'48

Prayer at 3.30 as usual. After the prayer Bapu walked from his bed to the room. There he took hot water and dictated the following article, but during the dictation he was exhausted from time to time and broke off with his eyes closed. The article bears the caption, 'No Anger and No Attachment'.

The Harijan

A friend writes : "I read your article about the *Urdu Harijan*. If the article had not come from your pen, I would have thought that somebody had written it in great anger. From what Jiwanjibhai has written we can only infer that there is no demand for the *Harijan* in Urdu characters. But why are you going to stop the publication of the *Nagri Harijan Sewak* on that account? Do you think that you were committing a sin when you were publishing the *Hindi Navjivan* without an Urdu edition? The *Nagri Harijan Sewak* was continued even after the *Navjivan* had ceased to be published. But you did not publish the *Urdu Harijan* at that time.

"If you had published the Urdu and Nagri editions of the *Harijan* only with a view to propagating Hindustani, it would have been quite fit. But the *Nagri Harijan Sewak* had a limited circulation

from its very inception. If is being run at a loss, you may well stop its publication. But I see no reason for stopping the publication of the *Nagri Harijan* as notified by you.

“Does the *Nagri Harijan Sewak* deserve greater condemnation than the *English Harijan*? It would be fit if the *English Harijan* stopped publication first. But actually more importance is given to the *English Harijan* than to other versions.

“It is a matter of great regret that while you give your post-prayer talk in Hindustani its gist is preserved in English in your office. Then its translation is published in the *Nagri* and the *Urdu Harijan* on the plea that the gist was no longer preserved in English. Perhaps the gist is now made direct in Hindustani.

“Many years ago you wrote that as far as possible you would write only in Gujrati or Hindustani and it would be translated into English. This practice was followed in the beginning, but it was more or less given up subsequently.

“Once again I would request you to stop the publication of the *English Harijan* and continue the other editions.”

Right use of words

Bapu : “If a man states what is really true, to brand him as ‘angry’ will not be using the word in its right sense. In anger a man acts foolishly. If I have to stop the publication of the *Urdu Harijan*, it follows that I must stop the publication of the *Nagri Harijan* too. Is it anger to state what is a must? What I consider indispensable may not seem so to another person, such as the sender of this

letter, but it does not concern me. It is not necessary that what I think indispensable must be regarded as such by the whole world. Every question has at least two facets to it.

Nagri as well as Urdu

“Now it must be decided whether only one is to be given up or both. It is a fact that when I was publishing the *Navjivan* in Nagri and also started the publication of the *Harijan*, there was no controversy about the two scripts, or at least I did not know of it.

“In the meantime the Hindustani Prachar Sabha was set up under the direction of late Jamnalalji. Now if the publication of the Urdu journal is stopped and that of the Hindi one is continued, it would be highly improper in my view, because the aim of the Hindustani Prachar Sabha is that Hindustani can be written in Urdu script just as it is written in Nagri script.

“Therefore, the periodical which was originally meant to be published in both the scripts must be published as such. That is all the more necessary when people from all corners of India are raising the cry that Hindi must be the national language of India and that it must be written in Nagri script. It is my duty to point out that this view is erroneous. If this view were correct, it would be my duty to adopt the Urdu script along with the Nagri script ; and if this might not be feasible I should give up the *Nagri Harijan Sewak* along with the *Urdu Harijan Sewak*.

Nagri is the best script

“In my opinion Nagri is by far the best script.

It is obvious. It was a long time ago, when I was in South Africa, that I began to write Gujrati letters in Hindi script instead of the Gujrati script. I have not been able to carry it on owing to paucity of time. There is room for improvement in Nagri script as in almost every other script. But that is another pair of shoes. I suggest it just to show that I am not opposed to Hindi in the least. But when the advocates of Nagri script criticise the Urdu script, try to establish the superiority of Nagri over all other scripts and talk of the domination of Nagri, it is then that I have to say that Nagri is a perfect script. From this point of view my decision would sound faultless and irresistible.

Victory will go to Hindustani

“My partiality for Hindustani stands vindicated. I believe that in the contest between Nagri and Urdu scripts Nagri will bear away the palm. Likewise, when you take up the question of languages, apart from the question of scripts, victory will go to Hindustani, because Sanskritised Hindi is artificial and Hindustani perfectly natural. Similarly, Persianised Urdu is artificial and unnatural. My Hindustani contains very few Persian words, yet my Muslim friends and Hindus from the Punjab and the North tell me that they find no difficulty in following it.

A sad memory

“Very few arguments in favour of Hindi appeal to me. Strange as it may seem, when I gave my definition of Hindi for the first time before the

Hindi Sahitya Sammelan¹, there was hardly any opposition to it. How the opposition started has a sad history behind it. I do not even want to remember it. I went to the length of saying that ‘Hindi Sahitya Sammelan’ was not a suitable name for the propagation of the national language. Nor is it now.

“I was not elected President from the point of view of propagation. Late Jamnalalji and many other friends had told me that in spite of the name of the Association its members were not interested in literature ; and, therefore, I set up a propaganda for the national language in South India in great earnest.

“I am dictating this lying in bed after the prayer in the morning of the sixth day of my fast. Many sad memories are flashing across my mind, but I do like to dwell on them.

Work matters, not the name

“I do not at all like a controversy about names. Whatever the name, our work should benefit the whole nation and the whole country. Workers must not be prejudiced against any name.

What shall I call it ?

“ ‘Our Hindustan is the best of all lands in the world.’ Is there an Indian who will not jump for joy at hearing these words of Iqbal² ? If he does not, he is surely unfortunate. Shall I call this language of Iqbal Hindi, Hindustani or Urdu ? Who will say that this is not our national

¹ A Hindi Literary Association with its headquarters at Allahabad.

² The well-known Urdu poet.

language ? Is there no sweetness in it ? Is there no nobility of thought in it ? Today I may be the only person to hold this view. But it is clear that Sanskritised Hindi can never gain currency, nor can Persianised Urdu. Victory can only go to Hindustani. When we forget our deep-seated prejudices, we shall also forget these trumped-up controversies and feel ashamed at the same time.

Hindustani is our national language and
English the world language

“Now I come to the English edition of the *Harijan*. It is a minor point. I cannot stop the publication of the English edition, because Englishmen and Indian scholars of English admit that there is a certain grace in my English. My contact with the West is also increasing. I never had any prejudice against Englishmen or other westerners, nor have I any prejudice today. I am as much desirous of their welfare as that of my own countrymen. Therefore, English will never lose its place in my limited stock of knowledge. I can never wish to forget that language, nor do I wish that India should abandon it or forget it. I have always insisted that English should never be given undue importance. It can never become our national language or our medium of instruction. In doing so we have impoverished our own languages. We have put a heavy burden on students. This piteous condition, so far as I know, obtains in India only. The linguistic slavery has deprived millions of our countrymen of a vast store of knowledge for many years. We do not realize it, nor

do we feel ashamed or remorseful. How odd it is ! In spite of this clear realization I do not want to displace English. Just as Tamil and other languages are provincial languages and Hindustani is the national language, so English is a world language, a global language. Who can deny this ? The domination of the English race will go because it was and is corrupt, but the domination of the English language can never go.

“I think that the *English Harijan* and the *Gujrati Harijan Bandhu* will pay their way, whether I write in Gujarati or English.”

Bapu dictated this much till 5.45.

The seven conditions

Bapu has laid down the following seven conditions as essential for ending his fast :

1. The tomb of Khwaja Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar in Mahrauli shall be made safe for Muslim visitors. The attendants of the *Dargah*¹ shall have no fear for their lives. Muslims should be able to visit, without any danger to their lives, the religious fair which is going to be held there in about a week. The Hindus and Sikhs of Mahrauli shall assure the Muslims who reside there that their lives shall be out of danger.

2. The 117 mosques of Delhi that have been occupied or turned into temples by Hindu and Sikh refugees during the recent disturbances shall be voluntarily restored to Muslims who shall be free to worship there. The Hindus and Sikhs residing in the quarters which contain mosques shall give an

¹ Tomb of a Muslim saint.

assurance that the mosques shall be restored to the condition in which they were before the disturbances.

3. The Muslims of Karolbagh, Subzimandi and Paharganj should be able to move about freely without any danger to their lives.

4. If the Muslims who have gone to Pakistan in despair wish to come back, Hindus and Sikhs shall not put obstacles in their way to resettle in Delhi.

5. Muslims shall be allowed to travel in trains free from danger.

6. Muslim shopkeepers shall not be boycotted.

7. The question of the resettlement of Hindus and Sikhs in predominantly Muslim areas shall be left to the sweet will of the Muslims residing there.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad announced these seven conditions at a mammoth gathering of Hindus and Sikhs numbering about 3 lacs. Rajendra Babu presided over the meeting. He must have exercised a wholesome influence.

There have been good omens since this morning. Perhaps the fast may be ended by midday. Bapu went for his massage at 8.30. Dr Vidhan Babu, Dr Jivaraj Kaka and Sushilaben examined Bapu there. Bapu complained of pain in the stomach and heaviness in the head. Vidhan Babu again pressed him to take sweet juice. Bapu said that in that case he would immediately start another fast for 21 days, whether peace was restored or not. Nobody could approve of such a step. Let us see how the day will pass.

Events are taking a good turn here. But it is indeed surprising that Jinnah Saheb has not uttered a single word yet.

Today Sushilaben was not present during the

massage. She had gone with Rajendra Prasadji to attend the meeting. Bapu was very restless in the bath. He spent an hour there. His weight came to 107 lb. ; there was no gain or loss. Therefore, everyone is seized with anxiety. Today Panditji arrived when the weight was about to be taken. He took the weight himself. He is so dejected that I am more grieved to see him than Bapu.

Signing the pledge

Today the rush of visitors coming and going was beyond reckoning. All bath-rooms were engaged. I had to go upstairs to bathe. When I came down, I found over a hundred people assembled in Bapu's room : Jawaharlalji, Rajendra Babu, Sikhs, Muslims, Randhawa and others. There was an overflowing crowd of photographers. The prospect seemed encouraging. There was no room for me even to stand. So I slowly squeezed myself through the crowd and at last got close to Bapu and sat there, so that I might not miss any entries in my diary.

Among prominent people there were Jawaharlalji, Shankar Raoji, Pakwasa and other members of the cabinet, Harish Chandra of Hindu Mahsabha and R. S. S., many Hindu and Muslim friends and Zahid Husain, High Commissioner of Pakistan. Rajendra Babu, speaking on behalf of all, said :

“Last night all prominent people assembled at my house, they discussed the matter in all its aspects and decided to sign a pledge to maintain peace. Since the representatives of some organizations were not present at the meeting, we decided not to come to you with the signed pledge but to

wait till the remaining signatures had been obtained. Accordingly, we met again in the morning and those who were absent last night also came and signed the pledge.

“During the morning session it was observed that even those who had some misgivings last night said with a sense of full responsibility that they could ask Gandhiji to end his fast. In view of their individual and collective guarantees I signed the pledge as Congress President. After that Shri Khurshed, Chief Commissioner of Delhi, and Shri Randhawa, Dupty Commissioner, who were present there, signed the pledge on behalf of the Administration. It was decided to form a few committees to enforce the pledge. I hope you will end your fast now.”

Lord of forty crores of people

After this Shri Deshbandhu said, “This morning a procession of Muslims passed through Hindu quarters and the Hindus offered fruit and snacks to them. It shows that there has been a change of hearts. You are the lord of 40 crores of Indians. Hence we pray you to give up the fast.”

That will be a fraud

After the speeches of various representatives Bapu whispered a few words. Pyarelalji would note his words and read aloud to the people assembled there. It was extremely difficult to hear Bapu's voice. I put my ear close to Bapu's lips and thus I could note his words correctly. Then I would hand the notes to Pyarelalji and he would read them out to all. This business began at 11.30.

Bapu spoke as follows : “I am glad to know this,

but all this is worthless if you have not considered one thing. If this agreement aims at securing peace only in Delhi and you will not care if violence breaks out outside Delhi, you will make a grievous mistake and I shall make a fool of myself by ending my fast. You will have read in the papers what happened at Allahabad. If you haven't read it, read it now. I take that the R. S. S. and the Mahasabha are also parties to the agreement. If they are participants in this agreement only for Delhi and not for other places, then the agreement is a great fraud. I know that such frauds are freely practised in India today.

"Delhi is the heart of India, its capital. All the prominent people of India have assembled here. The common people may well act like beasts, but those who are here are the cream of India. If they are unable to bring home to the people that Hindus, Muslims and the followers of other religions are brothers, it will be ruinous to the future of both the divisions of India. If we go on fighting among ourselves, where will India stand?"

Let us turn our faces towards God.

As he said this, Bapu was completely exhausted. He began to tremble to think of the infinite suffering of mankind. His very soul was shedding tears. Pyarelalji's heart was too full for words. So Sushilaben read out the speech. After two minutes Bapu found his voice and said :

"I was dazed. Being fatigued, I could not finish my talk. Let us not do anything that we may have to repent later. We must show courage of the highest order. Are we capable of it? If

not, do not ask me to discontinue the fast. You and all Indians have to do it. That does not mean that it has to be done within twenty-four hours. I have not the strength to do so. But I must say that so far our faces were turned towards Satan, and henceforth we must turn them towards God. If you do not accept whole-heartedly what I have put to you or if you are unable to comply with it, you must tell me frankly.

Decide after careful reflection

“Nothing can be more foolish than to assume that India is for Hindus alone and Pakistan for Muslims alone. Refugees must remember that the regeneration of Pakistan will come through Delhi. I am not the man to recoil from a fast. I have already performed many fasts and, if need be, I can undergo another. Therefore, whatever step you take, take it after due reflection.

A strong resolve perfectly feasible

“Some Muslim friends come to me and say that Delhi has now become normal and Hindus and Muslims can live together in amity. They may feel in the inner recesses of their hearts that they have perforce to live with Hindus today, because no other way is open to them, but that ultimately they will isolate themselves. If so, they should frankly confess it to me. It is indeed difficult to reform the whole of India and Pakistan. But I am a confirmed optimist. I always feel that if we set our hearts on something, it must become a reality. Today you are talking of an agreement between Hindus and Muslims. But if the Hindus think that Muslims are foreigners, demons or atheists and the Muslims

also think of Hindus in the same strain, there can be no worse infidelity than this.

Deceiving one is tantamount to
deceiving all

“At Patna a certain Muslim gave me a book as a token of his love. Its author is a famous Muslim. It says in the book : ‘It is God’s word that an infidel—and all Hindus are infidels—is worse than a poisonous creature. He is worthy of being killed. It is one’s duty to deceive him. One should not be fair to him.’ If Muslims harboured this feeling even in secret, it would be deluding Hindus to say that they would deal fairly by them. Deceiving one is tantamount to deceiving all.

“If I worship a stone with a true heart, I am not deceiving anybody. God resides in that stone. I thought what was the use of my living in the world if the hearts of both the communities were possessed of infidelity.

“Among the telegrams received today are some from leading Muslims. It is a happy augury. They seem to have realized that this is not the way to carry on a government.

After Delhi, Pakistan

“If after listening to all this you still want me to give up the fast, I shall do so. Then you will give me leave to go. So far I have been in Delhi, bent upon doing or dying. If success is achieved here, I will go to Pakistan and intercede with the Muslims there. Whatever happens elsewhere, people in India must maintain peace. The refugees who have settled here must bear in mind that, if people who have gone from here to Pakistan come back, they must be

greeted as brothers. They are in trouble there. If Hindus have not learnt the tactics of Muslims, it will be well if the Muslims come back. There are good and bad people in all communities. If after considering all this you ask me to give up the fast, I shall do so. But if India does not change for the better, what you say is a mere farce. Therefore, it would be better to let me continue the fast. If God wills, he might end my life."

Maulana's outpourings

After Bapu, Maulana Saheb said, "What Mahatmaji has said is concerned with the guarantee for communal peace. This guarantee can be given only by the representatives of the residents of Delhi. As regards the book I am to say that it is a blot on the fair name of Islam. The Prophet of Islam has laid down a verse in the Koran which says that all men are brethren, and, of course, they may belong to any caste or creed. Mahatmaji has referred to the belief of certain Muslims but that belief is antagonistic to the tenets of Islam. That belief is symbolic of the madness which had seized a section of the people a short time ago."

Pledge of loyalty

After this a local Muslim friend, Habibur Rehman, said, "There are two things on which I want to comment. In the first place, it is quite incorrect to say that my co-religionists do not regard India as their motherland. We come here every day at 5 o'clock, and we have been serving the country under the Congress flag for the last 30 years. When we are asked to reaffirm our loyalty to India, we consider it an insult to our nationalism. I remember

that once our friends and comrades in the Congress offered to provide for us a place of safety outside Delhi, because they thought they would not be able to protect us adequately against the rioters. But we spurned the offer and, trusting in God, decided to stay and move about in the city.

“So far as Jamiat-ul-Ulema is concerned its members are staunch followers of Maulana Azad Saheb and the Congress. Those who have gone to Pakistan have gone there simply to save their lives and to escape worse horrors. We all want to live in India with self-respect and honour as citizens of India, not on the sufferance of others. I dare say that if India were attacked, we would defend our country, India, to the last man. We have often reiterated in clear words that those who are not of this view should leave India and go to Pakistan.

A good omen

“We think that the change in the atmosphere that is visible today is a good omen. We are gratified that the tide has turned and it is drifting towards communal unity and peace, whereas it was formerly flowing towards bitterness. Formerly riots were taking place through malice and hatred, but now the pledges given by the leaders have been endorsed by the Administration. We have reason to believe that these assurances will be acted upon. Now I beseech revered Mahatmaji to break his fast.”

After this Goswami Ganesh Dattji said, “Your Holiness, because of your penance this great change has taken place. The change of hearts was 75 p.c. last night, but it is 90 p.c. today. We will carry out your behests to the letter.”

Bewailing in every home

Shri Harish Chandra of R. S. S. said, "All of us pledge our word before you that we will fully carry out your commands. Your fast has caused bewailing in every home. We swear that we shall maintain complete peace. We shall not demand houses, nor shall we demand employment. We shall carry on as best as God will allow us."

Anxiety in Pakistan

Zahid Hussain, High Commissioner of Pakistan, said, "I have come here to say that the people of Pakistan are deeply concerned. They inquire about the state of your health. We are ready to render you whatever help we can."

We shall obey your behests

Shri Harbhajan Singh, the Sikh leader, who is a resident of Delhi, said, "Today is the birthday of Guru Govind Singh. I am coming from the Gurudwara. Prayers were offered there for your well-being. Your message was read out to all persons present there. I did not come across any Sikh who would like to kill Muslims. On the other hand, all Sikhs declare that they must save the life of Mahatmaji. Please break your fast. All Sikhs who are in Delhi will carry out your behests."

Shri Randhawa

Shri Randhawa, Deputy Commissioner, said, "At a meeting held in the Town Hall I appealed to the people to put forth efforts, as speedily as they could, to save the life of Mahatmaji. I am glad to say that the situation in Delhi is quite different today from what it was three or four days ago. We of the Administration of Delhi will fulfil all your

seven conditions in their entirety. We shall live together in perfect love.”

Rajendra Babu then said, “I have already signed the agreement on behalf of the people. Please give up your fast.”

After listening to all the speeches Bapu said, “I will break the fast. God’s will be done. All of you may well be a witness to it.”

O Govind, be merciful !

Bapu said that prayers be offered first and a vein of enthusiasm ran through the environment. The whole room became charged with enthusiasm. All participated in our prayers.

At first we recited the Buddhist *mantra*: ‘Namyo ho rengo kyaun’. Then we observed silence for two minutes. After that we recited the Urdu prayer, ‘Aiz Billah’, and ‘Mazdah’ of Zoroaster. Then ‘Issavasya’ and the ‘Wondrous Cross’, and in the end, ‘From untruth lead us to truth, etc.’, and also the following prayer :

‘O Govind, the Saviour, be merciful. An elephant went to the beach to drink water. An alligator who lived in the sea caught him by the leg and knocked him down.

‘O Govind, the Saviour, be mereiful.

‘The battle lasted two-and-ten hours. The alligator dragged the elephant into deep waters and the elephant’s trunk and ears began to submerge. He then invoked Krishna. Krishna heard his call in Dwarka, for the elephant trumpeted loudly. Taking his eonch, *chakra*¹, mace, *padma*² and mounting

¹ A circular weapon.

² Also a weapon.

his vulture, Krishna set out to the elephant's rescue.

‘Surdas (the poet) says : O Shyam¹; I am at your mercy. O Son of Nanda, save me for this once.’

While this hymn was being sung, every throat was choked and tears of joy welled up in every eye. It seemed as if Lord Krishna himself had come to rescue the boat of life from the torrential mid-stream. The scene beggars description. Bapu's eyes were closed. His face was lit up with the glow of matchless penance. Had even the worst sinner caught a glimpse of Bapu at this moment, his sins would have been washed away. It was indeed an auspicious hour. Compared to the fast at Calcutta, this scene was unique.

After this *Ramadhun* (the name of Rama) was chanted, and then Maulana Azad handed to Bapu a glass containing 12 oz. of sweet juice mixed with glucose. Click went the cameras of the photographers in a jiffy. The fast was broken at 12.25. All Birla House went into rapture.

It is rather impossible to describe the facial expression of Jawaharlalji. Sheer joy would have been natural, but he was also gloomy to think that within six months of his Prime Ministership Bapu had to pass through this ordeal. He looked as if he bore the awful guilt of the fast. His features reflected that even amidst this great joy he could not forget the past. After this Bapu distributed bananas and oranges to all as a token of his blessings.

True valour

After taking the juice Bapu dictated the follow-

¹ Another name of Govind or Krishna.

ing message, as requested by the Sikhs, for the mammoth gathering which was to assemble in the Gurudwara to celebrate the birthday of Guru Govind Singh : "Sikh friends have shown great valour by subduing their anger. This is true valour. Guru Maharaj taught the same thing : One Sikh should be able to stand against a lae and a quarter people. It means 'Victory to the Sikhs !' "

Muslim women

About a hundred Muslim women in *burqas*¹ had came to persuade Bapu to give up his fast. But Bapu's room was packed to capacity, therefore, all of them could not get in.

Bapu was extremely exhausted. He greeted the women with folded hands and said, "No one should wear a *burqa* in my presence. I am as brother and father to you. What is the use of a *burqa* to you before me ? Your hearts should observe purdah. At this the women threw aside their *burqas* at once.

"I hope no Hindu or Sikh troubles you. If you all pray for me, I shall soon get as well as I was. God will respond to our prayer.

Live long !

Meanwhile Indira brought the news that Panditji was also on fast. How could Bapu muster any strength ? He had spoken at great length, listened to many speeches, and on the top of it there was a huge crowd of visitors ! Bapu got up immediately

¹ A loose flowing overall garment worn by Muslim women who observe purdah, completely enveloping them from head to foot, there being two small mesh-covered windows for the eyes.

and wrote this nice letter to Panditji in his own hand :

“Dear Jawaharlal,

Give up your fast. I am enclosing a copy of the telegram received from the Speaker of West Punjab. Zahid Husain said what I had already told you. Live long and be the Jawahar (jewel) of India.

18.1.'48

Blessings from Bapu”

A series of fasts

When all had left, we bowed to Bapu and retired for our lunch.

Arthur Moore was also on fast. He came to enquire after Bapu's health. He broke his fast at 2.30. Bapu said, “My body needed glucose in particuilar. I have got it and now I am feeling well.”

The refugees living in Wavell Canteen are also fasting. They have sworn not to touch food till they have seen Bapu.

Bapu is thoroughly exhausted today. Our day was also spent in moving to and fro. A large number of people were present at the prayer. It was drizzling pit-a-pat. Nature was sharing the joys of the human heart. There was a rising erecendo of noise today. Bapu's discourse lasted for nearly twenty minutes. As on other days, he spoke on the microphone, lying in bed, and had dictated the rest of his talk as on other days.

Freedom will be lost

“This is an auspicious day for me and it should be auspicious for you as well. What a happy coincidence that the birthday of Guru Govind Singh comes off today ! It is on this auspicious day that I have

been able to break my fast through your kindness. I can never forget all my life the kindness shown to me by all of you—the residents of Delhi, the distressed refugees who are staying in Delhi and all the officials of Delhi's administration. At Calcutta, too, I received similar affection from the people. How can I forget at this moment that Shahid Saheb made great efforts at Calcutta? Had he not helped me, I could not have been here. Many people still have great suspicions about Shahid Saheb. But that is none of our concern. We have to learn to be friendly towards every human being, whatever his nature. We shall not be hostile to anybody under any circumstances but treat everybody as a friend. Shahid Saheb and the other four heroes of Muslims are living in the Union. All of them are not angels, and likewise all Hindus and Sikhs are not angels. There are bad as well as good men among us. There are also among us people whom we designate as criminal tribes. We have to live in amity with them too. The Muslims are a great community. Not only this, they inhabit the whole world. If we want to have friendly terms with the whole world, what reason have we to be hostile to the Muslims of this country? I cannot forecast the future. But God has endowed me with intellect and a sincere heart. Confiding in them, I can give you a glimpse of the future that, if for one reason or another, we fail to maintain friendly relations with one another, with not only the Muslims of India but with the Muslims of Pakistan and the whole world, we should know—and I have no doubt—that India will cease to be ours and pass into alien hands, we shall become slaves, Pakistan will go into slavery, the



Pandit Nehru bidding farewell to authoress at Bhavnagar airport on their return from a tour of Saurashtra.

Union will go into slavery and we shall lose our hard-won freedom.

“Today very many people have blessed me and have assured me that all Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims, Christians, Parsees and Jews will live together as brethren and that all Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims, Parsees and Christians who are residents of Delhi as well as all refugees will never be unfriendly towards one another, whatever happens or whoever instigates them. This is no small thing. It means that we shall endeavour from now on that all people who inhabit India or Pakistan shall live together as friends. If the breaking of the fast does not signify this, I must say in all humility that you have not done the right thing by weaning me from the fast.

The duty of man

“Do not differentiate between Delhi and other places. If peace has been, or will be, restored in Delhi, it will also be restored in the whole Union and it is very likely to be restored in Pakistan as well. Nobody need doubt it. Nobody need have any fear on that account; even a child need not fear. In my view we had been moving towards Satan so far. I hope we are beginning to move towards God from today. But let us determine that, having once set our faces towards God, we shall never retrace our steps. If we can do so, India and Pakistan together will exert their influence on the whole world and will be able to serve and uplift all nations. I do not want to live for any other reason. A man must live to elevate humanity. It is the duty of every man to move in the direction of God.

By whatever name you call God, lip-homage to Him is useless if it is not heartfelt. If we remember that all life is one, there is no reason why we should treat one another as enemies.

All religions deserve our respect

“I am not going to say anything more today. But we must resolve from today that we shall not fight. I would like the Hindus to read the *Koran* as they read the *Bhagavadgita*. Sikhs should also do the same. And I would like the Muslims to read the *Granth Saheb* in their homes and try to understand its meaning. As we respect our own religion, so must we respect other people’s religions. What is good is good, whether inscribed in Urdu, Persian or any other language. The *Koran* is as good as the *Gita* or the *Granth Saheb*. This is my view, whether you accept it or not. I have been reading them. I can say frankly that I do not worship stones, though I am a Sanatani Hindu. Nor do I despise those who worship stones. God is present in stones too. One who worships a stone does not treat it as a mere stone but sees the presence of God in it. If we may not accept the presence of God in a stone, why should we accept the *Koran* as the word of God? Is that not idol-worship?

May God bestow sanity !

“If there were no malice in our hearts, we could learn to be tolerant, and if we are tolerant, we shall not make a distinction between Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. All are brethren and all must live and work together. All troubles now experienced in railway trains, such as the throwing out of men, girls and women, will come to an end. Everybody

will be able to live in peace anywhere. The Union and Pakistan as well ought to reach this stage of progress. I cannot have perfect peace of mind unless the refugees who have come here in a miserable condition from Pakistan can go back to their homes and unless the Muslims who have run away for dear life to Pakistan and wish to come back can live here in peace.

“I will say only this much. May God bestow sanity on us and the whole world, make us wiser and draw us closer to Him, so that India and the whole world may be happy.”

Fast in the name of Truth

After Bapu had said this, the following message from him was read out : “I undertook this fast in the name of Truth, popularly known as God. There is no God other than the living Truth. In the name of God we have uttered falsehoods and we have killed people mercilessly without caring whether they were innocent or guilty, men or women, young or old. In the name of God we have abducted girls and women and we have made converts at the point of the sword. I do not know if anyone has committed these acts in the name of Truth. Chanting the same name, I have broken my fast. The sufferings of our people were unbearable. President Rajendra Babu came to me with 100 men who comprised the representatives of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, and also the representatives of the Hindu Mahasabha, the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh and the refugees from the Panjab, the Frontier Province and Sind. They included Zahid Husain Saheb, High Commissioner of Pakistan, the Chief

Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner of Delhi and General Shah Nawaz of the Azad Hind Army. Seated by me like statues were Pandit Nehru and Maulana Saheb.

“Rajendra Babu read to me an agreement signed by these representatives. The agreement appealed to me not to plunge the people in further anxiety and to put an end to their grief by breaking the fast. I have received numerous telegrams from Pakistan and the Union, asking me to end my fast. I cannot set aside the advice of so many friends. They have assured me that Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Parsces and Jews will live together in perfect friendship, which will never be broken. To break that friendship will mean the disruption and the extinction of the nation.

Redeeming the people's pledge

“Even as I am dictating this, many telegrams wishing me health and long life are pouring in. May God grant me wisdom to redeem the pledge given by the people. If this pledge is fulfilled, I assure you that I will pray to God with fourfold energy to enable me to live the full course of my life and to serve the nation to my last breath. Learned men say that a man can live to 125 years while some put the maximum age at 133. Through the good wishes of the residents of Delhi, the Hindu Mahasabha and the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh my vow has been fulfilled in letter earlier than I had expected.

God's hand in the fast

“I have learnt that thousands of refugees and others have been fasting since yesterday. This was

inevitable under the circumstances. I am receiving pledges of heartfelt friendship from thousands of people. I have received telegrams of good wishes from the whole world. Can there be a better proof than this of the fact that God had a hand in my fast? But besides the fulfilment of my vow in letter there is also the spirit of it to be fulfilled. Obeying it in letter is useless without obeying it in spirit. The spirit of the vow consists in true friendship between the Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims of the Union and Pakistan. When an assurance has been given about the former, the latter must follow, even as day follows night. If there is darkness in the Union, it is foolish to hope for light in Pakistan. But if night is dispelled from the Union, it cannot but vanish from Pakistan. Indications of it have come to light in Pakistan. Many messages have been received from Pakistan and none of them is in conflict with our pledge. God, Who is Truth, will guide us in future as He has obviously guided us during these six days."

A wonderful sight

Bapu has grown extremely weak. As soon as the discourse was finished, all people ran together to have a glimpse of Bapu, even as a big crowd surges out of a detention camp when an order for their release is given. Bapu was seated in a chair in the verandah and was lifted high enough for even a tiny child to see him. This sight was so wonderful, thrilling and glorious that I am reminded of certain verses from the Uttarkand of the *Ramayana*. Lord Ramchandra returns to Ayodhya after passing fourteen years in exile and separation from his people.

The people are jubilant and, as a penance for sending him into exile, ask him for a boon, saying, 'Lord, we ask for only one boon and that is devotion to you.' Even today that scene depicting the people and Bapu flashes across my mind in all its vividness. It looks as if after undergoing a lot of suffering Bapu has emerged victorious from his penance. This evening can never be forgotten. I hummed these verses to myself :

Rama, Hail ! Sita's lover ! Protecting
All souls in the ills all affecting !
Lord of Avadh, of Sita and Heaven,
To me—asking—refuge be given ;

Foe Ten-heads, Score-arms's pow'r was
shattered
By thee, and Earth's dev'lish ills scattered ;
The demons were like mere moths flying,
In thy shaft's fierce flame burnt and dying.

Earth's jewel art thou, pure and charming,
With bow, shafts and sheath thyself arming ;
As sun-rays the darkness dispersing
That lust, pride and self-love were nursing ;

The demons were slain who men filling
With lust as their quarry were killing.
Lord, save helpless souls who have wandered
In sin's jungle and their lives squandered.

Who scorns thee, as fruit of his madness,
Finds sickness and bereavement's sadness ;
Life's fathomless sea drowns and covers
All those who are not thy true lovers ;

Deep poverty, pain and dejection
Are theirs who give thee no affection ;
All those on this story depending
Are one with saints in life unending ;

As one—from greed, pride and wrath guarded—
By them pain or loss is regarded.
This for thy true servants suffices ;
True saints leave all Yoga devices,

To serve thee, their ritual unfailing,
For this love and pure heart availing ;
Such saints roam this earth with true pleasure ;
As one fame and dis-fame they measure.

Brave unconquered Rama, foes quelling,
In pure lotus-minds bee-like dwelling,
Repeating thy name I adore thee,
Creation's ills all fly before thee ;

I honour thee always—'tis seemly ;
In thee good and grace dwell supremely ;
Subdue all those envi'us of thee, Lord ;
As thy humble servant own me, Lord.*

Think of the people praising Bapu's achievement
and then demanding—

I pray thee repeatedly, Vishnu Incarnate—
Be pleased, Lord, to grant me this favour—
That I may have always true intercourse
with thee,
And serve at thy dear feet forever.”*

Ramdas Kaka came. Dr Mehta, Jehangirji and
Jamshedji also came. Bapu sat down to spinning.

* Translation by Rev. A. G. Atkins

We tried our best to dissuade him from spinning that day, but Bapu said, "Bread obtained without sacrifice is said to be stolen bread. I have now started taking food, hence I must perform a sacrifice."

Bapu went to bed at 10 o'clock.

Today's routine

Bapu got up at 3.30. Brushed his teeth. Passed 6 oz. of urine. Prayer at 3.45. Took hot water with a spoonful of lemon juice and salt. Began to dictate notes for the *Harijan* at 5.45. Went off to sleep. Got up at 8.30. Passed urine at 9.5. Went for the massage at 9.15. Went to the bath at 10.20. Weight 107 lb.

Took 8 oz. of hot water at 11. Then there was a continuous flow of visitors coming and going. Conferred with them. Broke fast at 12.15.

Diet after the fast was broken : 8 oz. of orange juice with two tablespoonfuls of glucose ; 12 oz. of water with soakage of dried grapes at 1 ; hot water with honey and lemon juice at 3.30 ; 8 oz. of milk diluted with 4 oz. of hot water and four oranges at 8 ; 8 oz. of hot water with honey at 8.30.

Thus the day passed. Now it is midnight. After writing these notes and all urgent letters I am retiring for the night.

Birla Bhawan, New Delhi
19-1-'48

Day of silence

Prayer at 3.30 as usual. Then Bapu adjourned to the inner apartment as usual and attended to his work. This is his day of silence, so we have nothing to do in particular. Massage and bath as usual. Dr Dinshahji Mehta shaved Bapu, and I helped him bathe. Bapu's weight came to 106 lb.; he lost one lb. Then he talked to Jamshedji, Jehangirji Patel and Dr Dinshahji. Bapu barely wrote the replies to what they said. Jamshedji and Mehta related the pitiable story of the people of Karachi (Sind). They are residents of Karachi. In fine, they requested Bapu to come to Pakistan. Bapu stated in writing, "I do wish to go to Pakistan. Give me in writing all that you have said. I will take necessary steps to set things right."

When they were gone, Bapu got off to sleep. We spent most of our time with Bapu. Bapu had taken castor oil but had no motion. He is not yet taking solid food. He takes water with soakage of dried grapes, *mausambi* juice and barley water with glucose every time. He is passing enough urine and it is quite clear. He came to the prayer-meeting, seated in a chair. Today's written discourse was as follows :

Thanks-giving

“I have already received numerous telegrams from India and abroad, enquiring after my health and felicitating me on the end of my fast. More telegrams are pouring in. It is impossible to acknowledge them with thanks individually. Therefore, I express my heartfelt gratitude to those friends at this meeting. It is clear from these telegrams that my action was in no way unjustified. I wish to read out two of these telegrams—one from the Chief Minister of West Panjab and the other from the Nawab of Bhopal. People doubt the *bona fides* of both of them, hence I will read their telegrams to you. We should believe what others say. Had they been insincere at heart, why should they have sent these telegrams? The telegrams run as follows :

Two monumental telegrams

“Nawab Saheb has sent this message : ‘The appeal made by you to all communities for unification of hearts will certainly be endorsed by all good people in India and Pakistan. Since last year we have been trying to promote the spirit of love, friendship and goodwill among all communities, and as a result of it no undesirable incident occurred to threaten the peace of Bhopal State. I wish to assure you that we will not spare any efforts to spread this spirit further.’

“Now listen to the telegram of the Chief Minister of West Panjab : ‘The cabinet of West Panjab appreciates and admires the great step you have taken to propagate a vital objective. Our cabinet has always endeavoured to protect the life, honour and property of the minorities and to concede to

them an equal right of citizenship. We assure you that our cabinet will now redouble its efforts to implement this policy. We eagerly hope that conditions all over India will improve immediately so as to enable you to abandon your fast. In this province we shall try every possible means to save your precious life."

Bapu's warning

Bapu further said, "I have to guard you against another contingency. It has been recently noticed that whosoever wishes goes on fast at any time he likes without giving any thought to it. It would seem that fasts started in this way to get quick results will only bring disappointment. Besides, if an infallible remedy like fast is misused in this manner, it will cease to have any effect. He who performs a fast must think deeply. If he hasn't full faith in God, his fast has not the slightest value. A fast presupposes a clear directive from God.

Let bygones be bygones

"A heavy responsibility has now devolved upon the residents and refugees of Delhi. They must try to have frequent contacts with one another in the daily business of life. They should let bygones be bygones. Yesterday many Muslim women came to see me. A number of them were accustomed to purdah but they did not observe purdah in my presence. I was glad to meet them. We should now bear in mind not to take the law into our own hands. We should not try to take revenge for injustice done to us but leave it to the Government. At the same time peace committees must be alert."

After the prayer Bapu had a talk with Jamshedji, Jehangirji and Dinshah Mehta at 6.30 in the evening.

Has Jinnah's heart changed ?

Bapu said, "Let me tell you what impression I have formed of Pakistan. You tell me that Jinnah Saheb's heart has changed. But what proof is there ? Even now he swears at Sardar. Your contention is wrong. The proverb says : A bad workman quarrels with his tools."

Jehangirji pleaded, "The situation at the time of Gandhi-Jinnah meeting in Bombay was different from what it is today."

Bapu : "In my view it was no different. Moreover, I judge a man by his actions, not by his words. If what you say is right, why does Jinnah invent these scandals about Sardar ?"

Jehangir Patel : "These people think that you quite misunderstand them. Did you read Ghulam Mohammad's statement ?"

Bapu : "I didn't like it."

Jehangirji : "He said that he should reply in his capacity as minister."

Bapu : "I replied to his statement in the presence of Sardar and Jawaharlal. The leaders of Pakistan always try to put a wrong construction on our language. And now they want to take the case to a tribunal. Not satisfied with 55 crores, they talk of an additional payment of 5 to 10 crores. They have referred the matter to the Reserve Bank, but they talk as if they have not done so. If I happen to see Ghulam Mohammad some day, I will first of all put this question to him."

Jehangirji Patel : "But they believe that you are

a votary of truth. They are themselves saintly people and have a heartfelt sympathy for you."

Bapu : "I have come across many such people. They are not honest in their behaviour and dealings."

Jehangirji : "During your fast Jinnah Saheb asked me whether he should send a telegram. I told him that he should send a telegram only if he felt like it and explained to him that your state of health was precarious since you were living on water alone."

Bapu : "I don't think it was necessary for you to tell him that, nor do I care about it."

Pakistan's real intentions

Jehangirji : "They have now changed for the better. Abdul Nishtar is a lawyer. He says that no settlement can be arrived at if you go there without being authorised by the Government of India."

Bapu : "He too wants peace but on his own terms. That cannot lead to a settlement."

Jehangirji : "Before you say this, you should make your point of view clear to him. They think that the Government of India wants to impoverish Pakistan. Therefore, if you talk to them without reservation, they will be sincere to you ; and if you are bent on fighting, they will also fight. This is the real intention of the Muslims of Pakistan and their Government."

Bapu : "Can there be a greater prevarication than this ? Just see how the people of India, Hindus and Sikhs, have curbed their anger. Particularly the refugees and the Sikhs have given evidence of extraordinary courage, and despite their grievous sufferings they have pledged their word to treat the Muslims as their brothers. This is no small achieve-

ment. Do you and the people of Pakistan regard this colossal change, which has come about in seven days, an insignificant achievement ?”

No faith !

I felt it was cent per cent true that Sardar Dada was offended with Dr Dinshahji and Jehangir Patel. Bapu was bored, for they were all putting forth useless and baseless arguments. It was lucky that while this conversation was going on Jawaharlalji intruded upon them. Bapu said to him :

“I do not think any good can come out of it. I have met those people many a time. No settlement can now be arrived at through Jinnah Saheb. Nobody need go to Pakistan. I should not go there even in my individual capacity. Even if Liaquat comes here, I am not certain whether I shall go there or not. I am sick of all this business. They take undue advantage of whatever we say and I have lost faith in them.”

Birla Bhawan, New Delhi,
20-1-'48

Countless letters

Prayer at 3.30 as usual. Sri Jamshedji Mehta also attended the prayer. Bapu saw him reciting verses from the *Gita* along with me and after the prayer inquired of him about his study of the *Gita*. He talked to him for some time. Then he went through his mail. He is still receiving letters of congratulations on his giving up the fast. He wanted to talk to Dr Dinshah and so the latter gave him the massage and the bath. Bapu's weight came to 107 lb. today, registering a gain of one pound. He took only liquid food today as he did yesterday. He applied mud-plaster, did some spinning and interviewed visitors as usual. An enema was given at 4. After the enema he felt exhausted. He can only shamle about. He is extremely weak. We are spending almost the whole day by the side of Bapu. We have to send letters in reply to all enquiries after Bapu's health. A host of letters and post cards received contain stamps for return post. The business of replying to letters has been entrusted to me.

Responsible government in Bhavnagar

It is reported that after the inauguration of responsible government in Bhavnagar all the princes

of Kathiawar assembled together and arrived at the decision to integrate all the states of Kathiawar. On account of his fast Bapu could not send a personal message to Bhavnagar on the transfer of responsible government to the people there. Therefore; he dictated to me a note about it to be read at the prayer-meeting.

A loud explosion

On his way to the prayer-meeting Bapu received a telegram from Gwalior stating that people there were looting and killing the Muslims. So it would seem that the fire of animosity is still smouldering in the country.

Today Bapu went to the prayer-meeting mounted on a chair. While his discourse was in progress, a terrific explosion was suddenly heard nearby which made us almost deaf. Since Bapu's voice is still very feeble, I sat writing quite close to him, and was so frightened by the explosion that I caught hold of his feet. The crowd attending the prayer ran in all directions. Bapu resumed his discourse to keep the people calm and made gestures to them with his hand to make them sit down. But nobody was in a mood to heed him. Bapu said to me, "Why are you frightened? Oh! Probably some soldiers are having practice in sham fighting. This is all right, but if somebody actually came to shoot at you and me, what would you do?" Bapu told the assembled people also that probably some soldiers were engaged in sham fighting, and then he resumed his discourse.

An enemy of Muslims is an enemy of India

In his discourse today Bapu said, "Complete

peace has been restored in Delhi now. So I hope it will yield good result. But I have received a warning from Calcutta to the effect that the establishment of peace at Delhi will make no difference to God. (That is, it will make no difference to the representative of the R.S.S.) There is no limit to the sufferings undergone by thousands of men and women who have come to India. But they too have joined in this appeal for peace. Therefore, Delhi, which has proved the saviour of both India and Pakistan, has the pride of place in establishing heartfelt friendship. Our leaders, Sardar and Jawahar, have no disagreement on that point. They cannot be at variance between themselves. Both have the same views. They may perhaps differ in their modes of putting things. Sardar is no enemy of the Muslims. But if somebody tries to fool him, it is simply impossible. You should remember that he who is an enemy of Muslims is an enemy of India. In America negroes are still treated cruelly as if they were slaves, and yet the Americans indulge in tall talk about social equality. They do not realize the injustice of their actions. But we think that they are doing a wrong thing. Our journalists always condemn this inhuman practice of theirs. Therefore, if we cling to the excellent decision taken by us with God as our witness, we shall rise to a much higher moral plane."

Eagerness to go to Pakistan

[Bapu had said only this much when the explosion took place, resulting in great confusion. The discourse was held up for ten minutes. When the people became calm, Bapu resumed his talk.]

“As I have once said, I may start for Pakistan now. If the government and the doctors permit me, I can start immediately. I have not yet begun taking cereals. It will yet take 15 days before I can take that diet.

✕ Jawahar : a priceless jewel

“It is our good fortune that our Prime Minister is a priceless jewel¹ both in name and merits. In this beautiful land of India Jawahar is indeed born as a jewel. His house is always crowded with guests yet he has set apart two rooms in it for refugees. He has to shoulder very heavy responsibilities ; yet, if he has two mattresses, one wet and the other dry, he will use the wet one for himself, or else keep himself warm by taking exercise. If sensible people and big capitalists follow in his ways, many problems of the country will be automatically solved.

Why earn a living by fraudulent methods ?

“I have received yet another report that, taking advantage of my fast, some idlers have begun to print and circulate counterfeit currency notes. Why should they adopt these fraudulent methods to earn a living ? Can't they find an honest way of supporting themselves ?

The problem of Kashmir

“I have received a telegram from the President of the ‘Kashmir Freedom League’ of Lahore. It says that unless the Kashmir problem is solved, success is impossible in any direction, and that the Indian

¹ There is a pun on the word Jawahar, which literally means a jewel.

Government should withdraw its army from Kashmir and make over Kashmir to its rightful owner.

“In this connection I should like to know whether the Hindus and Muslims of Kashmir will live as enemies until the Kashmir question is decided. Moreover, Indian troops went to Kashmir only when the Maharaja and Sheikh Abdullah demanded military aid from India. It would be right to deliver Kashmir to its rightful owner, but to whom should it be handed over ? First of all, people who intruded into Kashmir from outside should vacate it. Then nobody will have any hitch in handing over Kashmir to its rightful owner. I have just performed a fast. I am not an enemy of anyone, nor do I consider anyone my enemy. Therefore, I request my friend who has sent this telegram to come here and explain his view-point to me.

Trouble in Gwalior

“When I was coming here, I received a message from the Muslims of Gwalior to the effect that the Muslims there were being harassed. On your behalf I wish to convey to the people of Gwalior that, if they behave in this manner, it will undo the remarkable success we have achieved here.

“I have received reports that there are altogether about 200 Indian princes, small and great. All of them have jointly decided to form one state. If this report is true, it is welcome. They will be doing a magnificent thing. The Prince of Bhavnagar has made over his state to the people of his own free will and in a spirit of self-sacrifice. Therefore, on your behalf I am conveying my heartfelt thanks and congratulations to the Maharaja and the people of Bhavnagar.”

Plot to kill Bapu

When we went inside after the prayer, we learnt that the explosion was a plot to kill Bapu. A young refugee, Madanlal by name, had been seeking an opportunity to kill Bapu. His plan was to kill thousands of people by throwing a bomb from the place where Birlaji's servant sits behind us. Fortunately, the servant clearly told the man to take his seat among other people who had come to attend the prayer. Therefore, he had to throw the bomb from a distance. Just as he was about to run away after throwing the bomb, a Punjabi woman courageously caught him and held him there till she handed him over to the police.

When can a man be called brave ?

This news spread like wild fire throughout Delhi and congratulatory messages began to pour in on the phone. We got tired of constantly picking up the receiver and at last we put it down. As soon as Lady Mountbatten received the news, she hastened to Bapu. She congratulated him on his escape. But even at that time Bapu simply said, "Some soldiers must have been practising shooting in the neighbourhood." He added, "On this occasion I have shown no bravery. If somebody fired at me point-blank and I faced his bullet with a smile, repeating the name of Rama in my heart, I should indeed be deserving of congratulations."

Madanlal's statement

We were in the same room where this man was being interrogated. The bomb was thrown from a place 75 feet away from where Bapu sits. Madanlal

is about 25 years old. He was making his statement boldly, saying that he had thrown the bomb with the intention of killing Bapu. More hand-made bombs were recovered from his pocket. Jamshedji has also come. Bapu had fixed an interview with him at 7.30 p.m. He had no information of this incident. There was a great crowd and commotion in Birla House, but he somehow managed to come in. He said, "In Karachi such youngsters are employed to do such things. I have seen many such cases. These youngsters are trained to make no answer at all and to keep on smiling, if captured." Madanlal returned only one answer : "I did so because I did not like Gandhiji's policy of maintaining peace and friendship."

At night Jawaharlalji, Rajkumariben and others came one after another. Khuhro is willing to invite Bapu to Sind, but Panditji does not think that any useful purpose will be served thereby. Bapu went to bed at 10. . . . 's mind is still unsettled. Bapu said to . . . , "I visualise a great sin in her doing so. I would rather like her to leave me or go to Rajkot or learn music in a national school." Kanu and Narayandas are of the same view in this matter. But I am surprised that neither Kanu nor Narayandas has arrived at any decision. So we are not able to do what should be done.

Birla Bhawan, New Delhi
21-1-'48

Why should I fear ?

Prayer as usual. All night I was brooding over Madanlal's plot to kill Bapu. The scene of his evil design moved before my mind's eyes. Had something untoward happened, what would have been the consequences ? The saying, 'If God protects, none can kill anyone', is quite true. What a big plot they must have hatched ! Bapu repeated the same thing before everybody : "God will keep me alive so long as he needs me and put an end to my life when he does not need me. I am only his servant. Why should I worry ?" Birla House has been put under military guard since yesterday evening. It was also proposed that those who come to the prayer-meeting should be searched, but Bapu strongly disapproved of it. After a long discussion the military guard was allowed to remain so as to satisfy Sardar Dada.

After the prayer Birlaji said, "I was afraid that you would not tolerate even the police patrol."

My protector is Rama !

Bapu said, "I'm not worried as you people are. If I had disallowed the posting of a guard, I should have added to the many worries of Sardar and Jawahar one more worry about my safety. Their responsibility is already very heavy. But I believe that Rama is my only protector. If he wants to



Foot it alone (*Ekla Chalo Re*)

end my life, nobody can save me even if a million men were posted to guard me. But the rulers of the country have no faith in my non-violence. They only believe that this police guard will save my life. Hence let them do whatever they like. In this age perhaps I am the only believer in non-violence. I pray to God to give me enough strength so that at least I, if none else, may be able to practise non-violence. Therefore, it is just the same to me whether or not the police are posted or elaborate military arrangements are made to guard my life. The reason is that my protector is Rama. All other precautions are useless. This belief is growing stronger in me day by day."

Is there a Yudhishtira today?

We are going through the usual pattern of routine. Bapu's weakness will persist for some time more, but he has now commenced walking with slow steps to the massage table. Perhaps he has grown more careless about his safety after the recent bomb explosion. In every context and on every occasion he says, "Don't worry on my account. God has still need of me and that is why he has spared my life. All the same death is the lot of man from the day of his birth. Then why should we fear death?"

While we were conversing, . . . , who did not agree with Bapu, said to him, "Bapu, why don't you take into account the fact that some people are more gifted than others in certain respects? Some varieties of sugar are sweeter than others. When you talk of duty in the abstract, others talk of duty in an emergency. While Yudhishtira was ascending to heaven, he could march on and on while his own

brothers fell one by one on the way.” Somebody interjected, “But wasn’t there a dog with Yudhishthira ? According to your illustration, is there a dog today which can ascend to heaven ? It was after all a beast but here I am talking of man. There isn’t even a single human being today who can ascend to heaven.” Thereupon Bapu said, “But is there a Yudhishthira today either ?” At this, everyone burst into laughter.

Not enmity but friendship

While Bapu was conversing with a delegation of Sikhs, Gyani Kartar Singh narrated the atrocities committed on the Sikhs.

Referring to a certain point, Bapu said, “I know what is happening there. But we cannot achieve our purpose by behaving like cowards. I have heard today that the Hindus of U. P. think that if they grow beards they will become brave. But is that the way to become brave ? I study your *Granth Saheb*, but I do not do so to please you, nor do I inform you when I study it. But Guru Saheb has not enjoined on the people to grow beards, to wear *kripans* (short swords) and to do this or that. If the Muslims consider the Hindus poisonous snakes, you shouldn’t have tried to wean me from my fast. If your action was a mere fraud, food would be like poison to me. I told the Muslims very clearly that if they wanted to deceive me it would be very unkind on their part.

“The change that has come about now is a unique demonstration of courage. Now we are not to return enmity for enmity but friendship for enmity. I take it that your statement is true. It

is good of you that you told me all this. There is perfect peace in Delhi today. But if you played a trick on me, this cup of orange juice would be as poison to me. This is only the third day since my giving up the fast. When I am restored to health, you can say or do whatever you like."

Gandhi is in a class by himself

Gyani Kartar Singhji : "A man in distress is out of his senses. Everyone cannot be a Mahatma Gandhi."

Bapu : "Mahatma Gandhi is neither an angel nor a devil. He is a human being like you."

A Sikh friend : "No, our Mahatma Gandhi is only one."

Bapu : "Are you two ?"

The Sikh friend : "Your voice travels over every nook and corner of the world."

Bapu : "There are also a number of cheats in the world, aren't there ?" (Laughter) The massacre at Sheikhpura surpassed even that of Nadir Shah. The same scene was enacted at Rawalpindi. So, why should I name Sheikhpura in particular ? There is no sense now in discussing who slaughtered more men and who less. The Sikhs have shown such bravery that I am really indebted to them. Despite their sufferings they accepted all my conditions in order to wean me from my fast. It is no small thing. But I'm doing the utmost that is within the power of a single individual.

Jinnah's order

"Three Parsees came to see me. They came here after meeting Jinnah Saheb and other leaders of Pakistan. They told me that great atrocities had

been committed in Karachi, but the people there were much ashamed of themselves now. No man denies that he committed crimes. Now Jinnah Sahab has issued an order to the effect that anybody found committing such crimes would be severely dealt with. Looted property has been recovered from the houses of officers. Therefore, I assure you that I will render whatever service I can. After all, I have to do or die. You will have learnt what happened yesterday, but I believe that God wants to take more work from me, and I have got to do it.”

Bapu was late for the prayer-meeting by ten minutes. He begged everybody's pardon. Then he said in his discourse :

Waiting for good luck

“People have congratulated me on remaining calm after yesterday's bomb explosion. Congratulatory telegrams, telephonic messages and letters are coming in. But in reality I did not show any bravery calling for commendation. When the bomb exploded, I thought that some soldiers were having practice in musketry in the neighbourhood. It was later that I learnt it was a plot to kill me. I shall be showing true bravery if a bomb were to explode in front of me without frightening me and you could see me bidding you farewell with a smile. I am waiting for such good luck. But today I do not deserve the commendation of the people.

God will deal out punishment

“I beg of you all not to hate or condemn the man who threw the bomb. The poor fellow must

be thinking that I am an enemy of Hinduism. I feel nothing but pity for this young man. Yet he made a bold statement before the police. We have no right to punish a person whom we think wicked. God is there to punish anyone who is really wicked. Hindu religion cannot be saved in this way. I have been showing equal respect for all religions from my boyhood. If Hinduism is to be preserved through me, God will make me an instrument for infusing this spirit into all people.

Conquer by love !

Yesterday the Sikhs assured me that none of them had a hand in that act. What does it matter if the man is a Sikh or Muslim ? I pray to God to bless him with sanity. I have told the I. G. P. to see that he is not harassed. We should try to conquer him by love. He deserves pity if he regrets that his action did not serve the interests of anybody. But if you felt that this old man undertook the fast for no reason and you wanted to escape the blot that might have come on you if I had died as the result of the fast, and if for that reason you tried to save my life, then you have sinned a hundredfold. But if you felt that disturbances in Delhi brought shame upon you, it would not fail to have its effects on that man. If the effect does not come off, the world will indeed be a sorry place to live in.

“Suppose you came to the prayer-meeting one day to remember the name of God and to glorify Him for His work and the police patrolling this area or any one else did not come to our help while a volley of bullets was being fired at us ; if even then I had the courage to repeat the name of Rama

with a fearless heart and a full-throated voice and made you also repeat his name, then I would be truly worthy of your gratitude.

“I was pleased to know that one of the weaker sex courageously held fast the man who threw the bomb. I believe that a man who has a pure heart, whether strong or weak, poor or rich, possesses everything. Whatever happens, I pray to God that I may prove worthy of the infinite affection in which you hold me.

Appeal to the Government of Pakistan

“The people of Bahawalpur are extremely panic-stricken. I have received today a telegram from the Nawab Saheb of that state, saying that he would do his utmost to pacify the people. A telegram from Bombay states that the lives and property of ten to fifteen thousand Sikhs are in great danger. I would request the Pakistani Government to assure the Sikhs that if they wanted to stay they would get full protection. If they could not give that assurance, they had better gather all the Sikhs in one place and send them here under full protection. Hardly anybody has the courage to strike at, or sully the honour of, the brave fraternity of the Sikhs. The Sikhs should keep patience. Only today I have deputed three Parsee friends to go and survey the conditions prevailing there.

The aftermath of 1942

“Comparing my recent fast to that of 1942, a friend has written to me that, if I were to die, still greater violence would break out.

“It is a fact that in 1942 violence broke out after I had been sent to jail. The present situation

is the aftermath of that violence. If at that time the whole country had remained non-violent, things would not have come to such a pitch. If my life is to be saved, only God can save it. If people die, observing complete non-violence, no harm can come. I am a poor man. I am incapable of doing anything by myself. But God can make even an incapable man His instrument for carrying out what He wishes.

“I am pleased to know that Hindu-Muslim clashes have ceased in Delhi. I am also glad to know that Muslim women can now go about their business freely. Let us turn our hearts into shrines dedicated to God. This is my prayer to you.”

Danger not yet over

After the prayer Bapu went in, seated in a chair. The stream of visitors still continues. After coming here he looked into the written version of his discourse. Everybody's heart melts with pity to hear the gruesome story of what is happening in Sind. Let us see what fresh step Bapu is going to take now.

At night Bapu conferred with Panditji for an hour. Surely, the fast and the bomb incident were dangerous for Bapu. But the danger to the life of Bapu does not seem to be over yet. From his writings, thoughts and actions it appears that he will take a new step or do something to discipline the people. The Working Committee is also going to meet in two days. Let us see what decisions it takes. The situation is still explosive. Stable peace seems to be far off.

At 9.30 everybody retired for the night, but I

was detained to talk to Bhai Saheb and finish the writing work. Everyone feels and says that people's loyalty to Bapu will now be put to the test. People often visit Bapu to earn cheap popularity. But Bapu is so large-hearted that he welcomes everyone with affection.

It struck me that though Bhai Saheb wrote letters giving sound advice to Narayandas Kaka and others like him yet it had no effect. But now I feel great pity for them. Bapu said to me, "People will show themselves in their true colours of themselves. It will not be proper if we try to expose them. At today's prayer-meeting I said that evil had no leg to stand on. For this reason I called you straight to Noakhali from Mahua by wire in face of overwhelming opposition." Bapu said these words to me when I was washing his feet.



Authoress washing Bapu's feet, Calcutta.

Birla Bhawan, New Delhi
22-1-'48

Reflections on the anniversary of Ba's death

Today was the anniversary of Ba's death and we went through a reading of the *Gita* from beginning to end. After listening to half the reading Bapu began to doze. He is still very weak.

After the prayer Bapu told me what had passed in his mind in the evening. He said, "I think that those who have been censured by society will have to search their hearts. Why should I sit in judgment over others? Let everybody be his own judge and let him live in society as he likes. I am pursuing the same policy with regard to the Congress, India and Pakistan. The future must always be uncertain. But one should live honestly to the last moment of one's life. I am fully conscious that my views are not shared by others and I am the only one who holds them, but those views cannot be changed now. The more I reflect upon them, the greater the conviction they carry with me. But those who are opposed to my views to the extent of laying hands on me shall have to search their hearts. I believe that the bomb explosion was an inevitable consequence of my views. But it is a sure signal given by God to awaken me. If you have been able to stand this sacrifice and terrible ordeal with a pure heart, you will be able to face great trials in future

also, because you have come to me of your own free will and with a spirit of selflessness. But since I have not put others to further tests so far, I will not do so now. It is the society which will put them to the test, and that will be to the advantage of the society and the people concerned. I felt constrained to tell you all this.

I am your true mother

“Today when the *Gita* was being recited in honour of the anniversary of Ba’s death, I was absorbed in deep thought about certain people. Gradually God will expose to me the real character of one person after another. Therefore, this explosion was brought about by Him. There is a great mystery behind this explosion, which nobody can know. But now I don’t see any advantage in discussing this matter with you. I am greatly depressed and so you should keep up my courage. You have acquitted yourself well. As I said yesterday at the prayer-meeting, I wish I might face the assassin’s bullets while lying on your lap and repeating the name of Rama with a smile on my face. But whether the world says it or not—for the world wears a double face—I tell you that you should regard me as your true mother. I am a true *mahatma*. If such an incident occurred, I should not be surprised. Now go and send Bisan to me, for I have to prepare matter for the *Harijan*.”

Bapu talked to me in this fashion after a long time. I noted all the points immediately after his talk. Bapu is going through his mail. A heater is placed by his side. For a while I thought over what Bapu had said, but this is what Bapu often says. I suppose there is no longer any danger to

Bapu's life. Nothing unfortunate will happen now and Bapu will be able to live to the age of 125. His heart is perhaps full of agony on account of the deceptive behaviour of . . .'s comrades. That is why he was speaking with a grave face and a painful heart. I did not comment on this matter, because it would have wasted Bapu's morning time and tired him. I do not care if others get angry with me. Their affairs have been brought to Bapu's notice and he has asked me to make a special note of such things in my diary. There must be some special reason for this. Let me see what happens next. Every minute I am overawed with the feeling that in the estimation of Bapu my importance is increasing day by day although he has so many followers, comrades and learned men at his disposal. He has a high regard for me and trains me for public life ; therefore, I am afraid lest I should come a cropper one day. Hence I do not relish it when Bapu says or dictates to me something about somebody. Since he exalts me so high, I may have a downfall some day. I would rather like to steer a middle course.

There is no second Jawahar

Ramdas Kaka came at 12. He is leaving for Nagpur today. Bapu intends to send Sushilaben to Bahawalpur to investigate something. Bapu said, ". . . stands no comparison with Jawahar. Jawahar's family has a culture all its own. There is no dearth of barristers or well-to-do men in India, but tell me if there is another Jawahar in India."

Bapu's daily routine is going on according to schedule. He has not yet started taking cereals.

His weight is stationary at 108 lb. The Muslims do not bring any particular complaints now. Delhi seems to be perfectly peaceful.

Everything is in the hands of God

Today Bapu walked to the prayer-meeting with slow steps. His legs have not yet become strong enough. We did not feel the load of his hands when he rested them over our shoulders in his normal health, but today we felt it. This shows that he is still weak.

But everyone was really happy to see him walking. In today's discourse Bapu said : "You can see that God is gradually giving strength to my body. I hope I will soon become as healthy as before. But everything is in the hands of God.

"I have just received a letter from a friend, stating that Jawaharlal, other ministers and officers had provided accommodation to the refugees in their houses. But how many people can be accommodated in them ? Other great men only indulge in big talk.

"The sender of the letter is right in saying that this cannot be of much help to the refugees. But by doing so we set up a certain standard. Likewise, any sympathy shown to people in distress has its effects.

Competition : our country's ruin

"Another friend writes : 'Formerly the Congress experienced a good deal of difficulty in raising one lac of rupees. But today the Congress has received crores of rupees and it can further raise an equal amount without any difficulty.' It is true that we have now acquired the capacity of raising money. But I see that our expenditure is maintained on the

same level as during the British regime. We cannot afford to spend money extravagantly in these crucial times. We may well think that nobody can stop us if we want to compete with the West in respect of certain items of expenditure. But we must not forget that our *per capita* income is much lower than what it is in western countries. If our poor country were to compete with foreign countries in expenditure, it would sound the death-knell of our country. This applies equally to our representatives who go abroad. Congressmen themselves used to say that after the achievement of self-government they would stop all extravagance. Hence we should now give up all waste of money on food and drink, parties and amusements in competition with the Americans. But I regret to say that we have not been able to do so till now. People should try to purify their hearts. No one can rise in the estimation of others by being wealthy or by burning money.

Equal share in the campaign for
purity of hearts

“I spoke to you the other day of the riot at Gwalior. But today I am giving you a piece of glad news. The Maharaja of Gwalior has decided to entrust responsible government to the people. It will be a red-letter day when the Praja Mandal will accept that responsibility. But at the same time if Hindu-Muslim quarrels persist, the position will be a difficult one. The Maharaja has to play the role of the servant of the people. In the present campaign for purity of hearts both the princes and the people will have to take an equal share. Only then it will

be possible to raise the world from the difficult situation into which it has sunk."

Bapu did not go for a walk after the prayer. He slowly walked to his sitting room. Doctors and many visitors had already assembled there. Bapu talked to them and discussed with them the resolutions which are to be brought before the Working Committee. Panditji came. After writing out the discourse we prepared to retire for the night.

Boundless affection

While I was giving massage to Bapu, he said to me again, "Note down all that I told you this morning and show it to me. Do not yet talk about it to anybody. It was necessary to confide to you all those things. Therefore, I conveyed them to you. If you keep happy and healthy, it will be my victory."

Bapu's affection for me is indeed boundless. In spite of many complex problems facing him he works so carefully and efficiently that you cannot find another instance of it. It is a wonderful lesson to me.

After talking and finishing my work I went to bed at 11. Today it took me a pretty long time to beat the end of Bapu's tooth-brushing stick into shape. I could not find a place where to beat it out, so that people sleeping in Birla house might not be disturbed by the noise. At last I hammered it on the door-sill. Because of the patrolling of the police guard there is a lot of vigilance in the compound and the out-houses.

Birla Bhawan, New Delhi
23-1-'48

May your service bear fruit !

After the usual prayer Bapu asked for my diary and went through it. He then dictated to me his comment on it as follows :

“Dear Manudi,

I looked into your diary after a long time. I was very pleased to read it. You have successfully stood your trial. You have served me with a wonderful devotion. I never found in my family or outside it such a righteous girl as you are. So I mothered you and no one else. But why do I find fickleness of mind in your notes ? And why do you not tell me the reason of it ? Why are you worried about . . . or anybody else ? That girl is befooling me. But truly a person who dupes others dupes himself. I esteem beyond measure the service you rendered me during this great sacrifice. You are guilty of only one fault and it is that you have ruined your health. That is not so much due to your physical labour as to your shyness. It is quite possible that there may be another bomb explosion and I may depart from you, repeating the name of Rama. If this happened, you would be a hundred per cent victorious. I would no longer be alive to see it. But these words and you will survive. And I should consider myself victorious when you become a blooming girl of

17 instead of looking like an old woman of 70 as now. Just think how God is helping us. All people have been exposed by their own actions and they can be seen in their true colours. But has this degeneration permeated the ranks of the Congress also ? This letter has become rather long. Send a copy of it to Jayasukhlal.

23.1.'48

Blessings from Bapu"

[While lying in bed on account of weakness, he caused me to write the above and in the end he wrote in his own hand : "May your services bear fruit !" Then he signed it as "Blessings from Bapu". Month and date . . . , Birla Bhawan. The time was 6 o'clock.]

After this he dictated another note in reply to a letter from . . . , who wrote as follows :

"Most revered Bapu,

I learnt this afternoon that you had started on a fast. I do not want to bother you in the course of your fast. But I cannot forbear to write as follows :

Friendship impossible

(1) It is impossible to bring about heartfelt friendship between Hindus and Muslims within five or six days of your fast. Of course, many processions will be taken out and meetings will be held to put up a show of unity. These may be desirable in themselves, but they cannot prove that complete unity of hearts has been brought about. Therefore, you may well break your fast under the delusion that unity of hearts has been established. I do not think peace established in Calcutta is the result of unity of hearts. But your fast will be fruitful to the extent to which the Hindus subdue their anger and



Exhorting I.N.A. men to serve the country with the weapon of non-violence.
Authoress standing near.

forbear from killing innocent Muslims. I think that would be reason enough to enable you to break your fast.

Indication of civil war

(2) You have carved out a unique place in the hearts of the people by your penance. Men have not yet come to understand that the dissolution of the body is nothing to worry about since the soul is immortal. Therefore, people cannot reconcile themselves to seeing your body wasting away. As such people will subdue their anger and bitterness. Subdued anger flares up when the occasion arises for it. I feel that it is for this reason that people seem to prefer civil war to the partition of the country.

Why this centralized production ?

(3) If it is desired to root out jealousy and anger from the hearts of the people, the Government should advise people to engage themselves in constructive work. But I learn from newspapers that 600 tractors and over 6000 tons of ammonium sulphate for manure are shortly going to be imported from abroad. It is right to industrialize the country to make it secure and self-sufficient. But I do not understand why the principle of centralized production is being applied to the primary necessities of life, such as food and clothing. Whereas in America increasing attention is now being paid to natural manure, we in India are taking to chemical manure.

Muslims not completely innocent

(4) The Muslims of India are not as innocent as they appear to be. I am telling this from my own experience. From their tale of woe which the Muslims of Delhi pour out to you, you are not to

conclude that all or most of the Muslims of India are innocent and living in misery. On the contrary, the majority of the Muslims are looking forward to invasion of India by Pakistan and the consummation of their good fortune. I am not speaking of Muslims living in rural areas but they too will use their small stick to beat us. Therefore, I believe that Pakistan is not realizing its responsibility, because it is fully convinced that the Muslims of India are on its side. Pakistan is sure to take full advantage of this weakness of ours. I also think that it has the support of some foreign powers that want to serve their own interests.

(5) On these grounds I assume that by your fast you expect the Hindus to exercise self-restraint.

(6) I believe that Muslims can be pacified in two ways. For one thing, the Hindus should purify their hearts, but this hope has long since been belied.

Non-violence of the weak

You once said that till now the struggle of the Congress had been a demonstration of the non-violence of the weak. And when it has come by power it must needs tread the path of violence with redoubled energy. This is clear from the policy pursued by the present Congress Government of Bengal. For another, the Government of India should adopt a firm attitude. I feel the country suffers to the extent to which the Congress acts under your influence and follows its own weak-kneed policy."

To this letter Bapu gave the following reply :

National unity a pillar of freedom

"The above letter is thought-provoking and,

therefore, merits publication. Instances of a change of hearts may come to light immediately. But it would be more correct to say that such a change is not always lasting. I have given up my fast. I am waiting to see if it will have a lasting effect. By saying so I do not want to belittle the importance of the above letter. Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims have all to learn a lesson from it. National unity is not a new objective. It has always been sought after. It is a pillar of India's freedom. Without it freedom will crumble. It is an axiomatic truth. The intervening period, if it has at all ended, was a period of our stupor. Therefore, we can hope that the peace established in Delhi will hold or last.

Take to the work of reconstruction

The work of reconstruction is the foundation on which peace can rest. We must not forget this. It is to be seen how the scheme can be worked out. Every worker who believes in this principle should follow it in his own life and persuade his neighbour to follow it. By understanding its technique we can make our task interesting. It is an everyday experience that we cannot forge ahead by imitating others blindly.

Chemical manure is harmful

I have not the least doubt that tractors and chemical manure are harmful. I do not think that all the Muslims of India are innocent. Because of the creation of Pakistan they find themselves in a strange predicament. The majority community should see that full justice is done to them. If the majority community thinks of crushing the minorities and establishing a Hindu Raj, I can see that it will

bring ruin upon the majority community and the Hindu religion. This is an occasion when evil feelings and ignorance can be wiped out from the hearts of both the communities by making honest and constant efforts.

The fifth para is rather vague, if I have been able to understand its Gujarati language correctly. My fast was meant for the purification of all—Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims and others. I hoped for their purification and still hope for it.

Right opportunity for practising non-violence

The sixth para contains only a battle of wits. It is not dictated by feelings of the heart. It cannot be categorically stated that what was not achieved during the struggle for freedom cannot be achieved now. Today we have the right opportunity for establishing the rule of non-violence. It is true that people are labouring under the delusion of arming every man. If some people could divest themselves of this false notion, they would be regarded as embodiments of the non-violence of the brave. They would be considered servants of India *par excellence*. So long as my contention is not established by intellect or reason and is not proved by experience, we must have faith in it. If we have no faith, how can we give it a trial and have an experience of it?

No other way is possible

The Government of free India should carry on with courage and firmness. There is no other way out. A government which is weak and does not exercise its intelligence is unfit to govern. Only those who do not understand Pandit Nehru and

Sardar say that they are weaklings. If my contact with them were to make them weaker, I should be ashamed of it and the country would also suffer thereby."

Massage, lessons in Bengali, bath and other things went on as usual. Pantji dropped in. His . . . was not very pleasing. Today Bapu dozed in the bath while he was being shaved.

I am Rama's servant

Bapu wrote to . . . : "The fast has ended. It has not lessened but increased my responsibilities. I am recouperating my health gradually. If people keep peace in Delhi, only then my work will have value. I would have died on the 20th, but Rama had still to take work from me and so he saved my life. If I were to die smilingly, even as I am smiling now, I should deem it a splendid favour of God. But shall I be the receipient of that glorious favour? I fervently wish to die such a death, nay, my wish is growing stronger. This morning I had a heart-to-heart conversation with dear Manu after a long time. I am a servant of Rama, I shall continue to do my work so long as He commands me; and I shall depart when He orders me to do so. I am ready for both the contingencies. Only I pray to God to grant me the favour to comprehend non-violence myself and make others comprehend it. You must also join me in this prayer.

Blessings from Bapu"

On the birthday of Subhash

Bapu is still taking only liquid food. He had a sound sleep in the afternoon. The cold is still

severe. As far as possible he sits out in the sun in day time and wears his Noakhali hat.

Junagadh seems to be quiet now. Bapu says that if Nawab Saheb had not fled the state he would have received the honour he deserved and he would not have suffered any financial stringency. But he acted as he did under the instigation of Pakistan. During this period . . . came here from time to time. Bapu thinks he has some secret intention in coming here. Possibly he wants to extort some money. Bapu has asked me to enquire about his intentions when Balwantbhai comes here.

Panditji, Suchitaben, Kripalaniji and other local leaders frequently come here. Lady Mountbatten also enquires after Bapu's health from time to time. Shailenbhai informed Bapu that today was Netaji's (Subhash Babu's) birthday and requested Bapu to say a few words about Netaji at the prayer-meeting.

Saints pick out virtues as swans pick out milk

Today women were making a lot of noise at the prayer-meeting. So I found it difficult to take notes.

Bapu said, "Today is the birthday of Subhash Babu. I hardly remember anyone's birthday, but I was reminded of Subhash Babu's birthday and that gives me pleasure.

"Subhash Babu was a votary of violence as I am a votary of non-violence. But what of that? Tulsidas says in his Ramayana : 'Saints pick out virtues and overlook vices just as swans pick out milk leaving behind the water mixed with it.' Just as a swan drinks only milk leaving behind the water mixed with it, so a man has both virtues and vices

but we should admire and follow his virtues only.

“It will be untimely to dwell on his greatness as a patriot. He gambled away his own life for the sake of his country. What a huge army he raised, making no distinction of caste or creed ! His army was also free from provincialism as well as colour prejudice. Being the commander of this army, he did not seek comforts for himself while denying them to others. Subhash Babu was tolerant of all religions and consequently he won the hearts of all men and women of his country. He accomplished what he had set his heart on. We should call to mind his virtues and practise them in our lives. This will be a lasting monument to his memory.

To Muslim friends

“I have received a telegram from Gwalior, stating that there was some quarrel in a certain village there. There was no tinge of any Hindu-Muslim enmity in it. I am glad to know this. I want to say a few words to my Muslim friends. Whatever news I receive, I place before the public, and through the medium of the radio it reaches the people immediately. But those Muslim friends who will give currency to false reports or invent stories in the wake of their preconceived notions will forfeit the respect and love of all. People will become unsympathetic towards them. Therefore, no one should exaggerate anything ; only that person can progress in the world who makes a mountain of his own fault and a mole-hill of another person's fault. This is a very easy way of reaching the threshold of Heaven.

“I have written to the Government of Mysore, asking them to send a true report of what has happened there. I have received telegrams from the Muslims of Junagadh, stating that they have been receiving justice ever since the administration of Junagadh passed into the hands of Sardar Saheb. Nobody can sow the seeds of dissention in Junagadh now. I am very pleased to hear this.

Faith is essential

“The Muslims of Meerut tell me that my fast had a good effect there and that they want the present government to continue.

“God alone knows who raised the question of changing the present government. But if you do find the present government unsatisfactory, it is within your power to change it. At the same time I must say that it is very difficult to carry on the administration in the extremely disturbed state of the country today. The government cannot carry on the administration if people have no faith in it. It is the function of a government to administer justice and that work must be entrusted to it.

“I am still receiving telegrams inquiring after my health. It is not possible to reply to them individually. But I pray that their good wishes may bear fruit.”

After the prayer Bapu felt giddy for a while. He has not yet regained his normal strength.

After the prayer he wrote down his talk and conferred with Panditji. Bapu will himself make draft of the Congress creed as requested by Panditji.

At 9.15 we got ready to retire for the night. Perhaps we shall have to go to Wardha. It is

proposed to call a meeting of Congress workers there in Gopuri where the anniversary of Jamnalalji's death will be celebrated. Bapu is undecided about staying at Sevagram permanently. So the question of running all the institutions in Sevagram will also be considered at the meeting. This will incidentally test whether peace will be maintained in Delhi in the absence of Bapu. In case peace continues, he will think of going to Pakistan.

While I was giving the massage, Bapu said to me, "I wish that before we go to Pakistan Jayasukhlal should come here to see me." I said, "I will not write to him. You may do so if you like, because he may not come if I write to him." Bapu asked me to remind him tomorrow morning about writing to him.

Birla Bhawan, New Delhi
24-1-'48

Letter to Jayasukhlalji

Prayer as usual. Then Bapu went in and dictated a letter to my father. He did not need to be reminded.

“Dear Jayasukhlal,

I am writing to you after a long time. During this interval Manudi has been writing to you and you to her. So we were kept informed of each other's affairs.

It may be said that I have achieved something in Delhi, but God alone knows how long it will last. I am still feeling weak as a result of the fast, but God is restoring my strength day by day. The kidneys and the liver are not functioning properly. I am writing this letter to you on purpose. You sent Manudi to me a year ago and in a way you have dedicated her life to this great sacrifice. I must say that I have been often harsh to her in testing her. I am not wrong when I say this. Yet I must say that my treatment of her has been more kind than harsh. She has acquitted herself well. I said in Shrirampur that I had to do or die in this sacrifice. I am still facing both the alternatives here. There was a bomb explosion on the 20th. Among other people Manudi was sitting close to me. Hence both

of us would have been killed if death had come at all. But who can kill us if God guards our lives ?

Fulfilment of conditions

I had a long talk with Manudi yesterday. I suggested that she should write to you asking you to come here or go to Sevagram if you were free. I may go to Wardha to be present at the death anniversary of Jammalal. But it is not yet finally settled. I do not think I can leave Delhi. But dear Manudi said that I should write to you since I had laid down certain conditions for this sacrifice. Therefore, I am dictating this letter. If you can come on learning about my whereabouts from newspapers, it will give me real pleasure. You will know then that I have discharged most of my obligations. Manudi has been regularly sending a copy of her diary to you. She has made appreciable progress in that art also. She takes a lot of interest in jotting down notes. When I see this, the face of Mahadev inevitably springs up before my eyes.

I am dictating this letter immediately after prayer. I have a heap of mail to reply to. If God wills, we shall meet in a few days. Then we can discuss matters personally. Dear Manudi is happy. Let me know of a specific which can make her put on flesh. I hope your other daughters are happy in the homes of their fathers-in-law.

Blessings from Bapu"

Bapu dictated the following to. . . "The situation is quiet here, but there is some trouble in other places. Conditions in Sind and the Frontier region are deplorable. I have sent Jehangir Patel and Dinshah Mehta to confer with Jinnah Saheb, Liaquat

Ali and others. I hope Suhrawardi will help me a lot in going to Pakistan. But all this depends on the will of God.

Welcoming the longed-for death

“With the grace of God I am slowly recovering my lost health. I am a servant of God. I shall carry out His work so long as it pleases Him. I shall regard myself a success if God sends me a death which will prove the efficacy of truth and non-violence in my life. What happened on the 20th was no demonstration of bravery on my part. I supposed that some soldier was undergoing training in musketry. How should I have acted if I had actually faced death? I am not yet a *mahatma*. If people call me a *mahatma*, what is it to me? I am only an ordinary man. If I have truly kept the vows of truth, non-violence, non-stealing, celibacy, etc., calling upon God as my witness, I shall die a death I have longed for. I have already said at the prayer-meeting that, if anybody were to strike a death-blow at me, I should like to die without a show of anger at him and with the name of Rama on my lips.

“After the prayer today I wrote a letter to Manu’s father, and this is the second letter. I have a stack of letters with me. The Working Committee will also meet from today. So I must attend to my mail just after prayer.

“Do keep me posted about the affairs at your end. I am not yet definite about coming to Sevagram.”

After dictating both the letters Bapu had a nap. He had massage, bath, etc. as usual. He is feeling

very tired today, and so he has been observing silence since morning. He did so because the Working Committee is also going to meet this afternoon. He is still taking liquid food. Sushilaben is at Bahawalpur. The English translation of the talks is done by Chandwaniji from my Hindi notes. But Bapu has to scrutinize it carefully.

Chandben was suffering from . . . on her cheek, so she underwent a minor operation. She is also weak. She was thrown out of the train and its effect still persists. She vomited after taking tea in the afternoon. Bapu cares a lot for her and tries every possible remedy. Thus, in spite of his own weakness caused by the fast, very heavy pressure of work and the business of interviewing Indian and foreign visitors, Bapu is never slack in looking after everybody. There was a meeting of the Working Committee in the afternoon. Just after that Bapu went to the prayer-meeting.

Delay is unbecoming

Today the prayer-meeting was largely attended and it was noisy too. The Kashmir question has taken a serious turn.

Giving his discourse today, Bapu said : "It was settled that the two countries, India and Pakistan, would exchange prisoners and send the abducted women to their homes. But the matter is still in the melting-pot. The Government of West Punjab has put forward a new demand. They want that the prisoners belonging to Indian states in East Punjab should also be exchanged along with other prisoners. But the Government of East Punjab contends that, when the agreement was drawn up, no such stipula-

tion was made with the Government of West Punjab and that it was not right for them to propose new conditions at this stage. Personally I would say that nobody insists that, if West Punjab Government returns us 10 girls, we should give them back only 10 girls and not 11. This exchange should not be subjected to conditions. If my voice could reach the West Punjab Government, I would suggest to them that it is immaterial whether one side is more guilty than the other ; but if goodwill prevails on both sides, which are equally guilty in this respect, the alleged reason for delay in such an important matter as the exchange of abducted women is neither right nor strong. When I find people acting against their own declarations, I feel that my action in giving up the fast was rather hasty. It is not enough to carry out my advice to the letter, but people should understand its underlying spirit."

The women were making so much noise that it was hard for Bapu to make his voice heard and for the congregation to hear it.

The Working Committee also discussed the exchange of prisoners.

Panditji came after the prayer. He was here for a pretty long time. The environment has become so calm that the Urs fair in Mehrauli, which comes off on the 27th, can be held peacefully. On the whole, Delhi is quiet, but Sind is much disturbed and we shall be lucky if its repercussions are not felt here.

Test of greatness

Spinning, massage, etc. went on as usual. At 9.15 we got ready to retire for the night. Bapu's

marvellous personality is best seen in his heterogeneous surroundings. It is a hard test for anyone to live in close association with him. Only one to whom God is merciful can stand the test. Many people say that even great men are surrounded by deceptive people and it is in their midst that their greatness is put to the test.

Birla Bhawan, New Delhi

25-1-'48

Disturbed environment

Prayer at 3.30 as usual. While brushing his teeth, Bapu said, "I find that the atmosphere in the Congress, in the country and in Delhi and in my immediate surroundings is not yet quite peaceful. I see that it is still overcast. The purpose of my fast was not only to bring about national purity but all sane people who are close to me were to purify their hearts. It has been arranged that only *kacha*¹ food will be served in Noakhali. . . . and . . . should be informed of this. People say that the Congress has let them down and Jinnah Saheb has let me down. But I think that my own close associates are letting me down. Therefore, I say it would be better if they go their own way and let me alone. That will be good for me, for them and for the society. I think that . . . should make it clear what he intends to do. Otherwise it would be better if he does whatever he likes. I do not like that he should do anything against . . .'s will. It is no ser-

¹ Food cooked in water only, not fried in ghee or cooked in milk.

vice to me. I have the same affection for Manu and . . . Manu was, not, and is not, responsible for his or her actions, yet people put the responsibility on her. He is her father-in-law and that man is her husband. It is surprising that they are keeping mum about it. The same is the case with . . . By blood relationship Manu is my grand-daughter, but other girls are equally so. God is a witness to it. All girls are as grand-daughters to me and my grand-daughter is like all other girls. Yet it is true that I have a greater regard for Manu than for others. That is because she threw herself whole-heartedly into this great sacrifice. She has successfully borne herself through it. As a result of it I survived the ordeal and was able to maintain my health withal. If people have sanity or good sense, you will see that the history of this sacrifice will be an inspiration to future generations. Whether I die or live longer, I have given a practical demonstration of my philosophy of life through this sacrifice. People may not realize the significance of this sacrifice. Perhaps Manu may not realize it either, because she is too young to entrust me to the future. When I think deeply, the consciousness that I have almost fulfilled the main purpose of my life, which is self-satisfaction, dawns upon me."

Bapu said all this in a grave tone while brushing his teeth.

Do your duty

After the prayer he came into his room and said to me, "Even now I am not certain whether an atmosphere of natural love prevails. Some people avoid taking certain steps, merely because Bapu

does not like them. But I do not approve of this practice. The same practice was followed in the Working Committee also today. To avoid taking a certain step merely because Bapu does not like it is neither good for Bapu, nor for the country, nor for ourselves. We have really to consider what our duty is. To be exact, the object of my fast was, and is, self-examination. What I have said is the outcome of the anguish of my heart. It is a fact that I am growing indifferent to other people's affairs day by day. For this reason, when Brijkishore tells me to ask Jawaharlal to do certain things and to ask Sardar to do certain other things, I flatly refuse and tell him that I may mention those things to them only if they initiate the discussion, otherwise not."

Since this morning the atmosphere has been rather tense. Although Bapu is going through his regular programme, I find that he is absorbed in serious thought. In the afternoon he had a minor dispute with . . . When I was placing a pillow for him for use during the meeting of the Working Committee, Bapu said, "Tell him that he can stay here only if he lives peacefully. He should not give vent to such anger if he wants to serve me." Bapu said these words in sorrow and anger. Just then Balwant Rai Mehta came and advanced to touch Bapu's feet. So Bapu's remarks were cut short. It was a relief to me, because I felt that I was being dragged in for nothing. Had I mentioned this to Bapu, he would have said, "If even now you cannot call a spade a spade, when will you be able to do so?" At last, I had to carry Bapu's message to the person concerned. The Working Committee

met from 2 to 5. The integration of the states of Kathiawar has almost been finally settled. The princes have realized that they cannot remain independent. It is good that they are willingly transferring their states. This will ensure mutual good relations.

Bapu will write a note on the present position of the Congress for publication in the *Harijan*. He has also agreed to give the Congress the benefit of his guidance. Bapu expressed his desire to leave Delhi, but the leaders think that Bapu's presence in Delhi is still necessary. It was also decided that the Kashmir question be firmly dealt with. No improvement is yet visible in Pakistan's policy regarding exchange of population. In the words of Sardar Dada, "their work in this respect is as slow as picking up bacteria from milk." The subject of linguistic states was also discussed.

While writing up my diary, I also make entries in ...'s diary, because ... cannot write Gujrati well.

At night Bapu went to bed at 9.30. He is now observing silence. Today I was absorbed in various thoughts. I am gaining new experiences, and they will stand me in good stead. But when Bapu asks me to convey an unpleasant message, I begin to tremble. I pray to God not to make me an instrument for hurting the feeling of others.

Hindus to be protectors

In today's discourse Bapu said, "Some Hindus and Muslims come to me. They all tell me the same thing, that Delhi is perfectly peaceful. They have realized that, if they keep on fighting, it will do them no good. Therefore, I need have no anxiety on that score.

“The Urs fair at the *dargah*¹ in Mehrauli will be held from tomorrow. We damaged the tomb and its beautiful artistic work. But now some reconstruction work has been done. So the annual fair will be held there. In the past this fair was visited by both Hindus and Muslims. They should visit it in the same way this year. But I would request the Hindus not to create any situation that may spread panic among the Muslims. Instead of the police the Hindus should protect the Muslims.

“I have something more to say. I may go to Wardha on 2nd February. Rajendra Babu will accompany me and I shall come back as early as possible. But I shall go only if you assure me that I can go wherever I like without having any anxiety. After that I want to go to Pakistan also. But before I go there, the Government of Pakistan must invite me and leave me free to carry on my work there.

Creation of linguistic states

Whenever the Working Committee meets at my place, I am able to get some important information, and I always pass it on to you. Today we discussed an important matter, namely, the creation of linguistic states. This is not a new move on the part of the Congress. This question has been under discussion for the last twenty years. Today there are nine or ten states in the country and they are all subject to control from the centre. If more states are created and they are placed under the control of the Government at Delhi, there can be little difficulty. But if all states demand to be autonomous without

¹ Tomb of a Muslim saint.

owning any responsibility to the Centre, the reorganisation of states will be a blunder. If new states are formed, people should not feel that Bombay has been cut off from Maharashtra or Maharashtra from the Carnatic. If this happens, our work will be undone. If linguistic states are formed with a view to their supplementing one another, the provincial languages will develop and become rich. Another issue raised by some people is that education should be imparted through the medium of Hindustani in all the states. This is thoroughly impracticable. On the other hand, it is decidedly harmful to adopt English as the medium of instruction.

“I do not like the creation of a boundary commission either. Every state must cooperate with the neighbouring states. This is true democracy. If government does everything for the people, the latter will become cripples.”

After the prayer Bapu observed silence for the day.

Bapu's Comments on Independence Day 27

Birla Bhawan, New Delhi
26-1-'48

Entry of Harijans into temples

Prayer' as usual. Today Bapu is observing silence. Therefore, I led Bapu to his room and then went off to sleep.

Bapu engaged himself in editing the *Harijan*. He had received Bhagwanji Bhai's letter from Badhwan about Harijans' entry into temples. Bhagwanji wrote that Harijans were made to enter Haveli Temple against the wishes of the trustees. But a foreible entry of Harijans into D. J. Jain, Swami Narayan and other denominational temples, which hold out no particular attraction to Harijans, was senseless. Bapu wrote in reply : "The distinctions made by the sender of the letter are fictitious. Every Hindu can and does visit Swami Narayan Temple and the Jain Temple. Therefore, Harijans can also enter them. For many years an agitation has been going on to prove that both Harijans and Brahmans have an equal right to enter the temples. A good deal of success has been achieved in this respect. In the state of Bombay an Act was passed to that effect. If people do not like it, it will take effect slowly. In a democratic state no law can be enforced against the will of the people. It requires a lot of discretion. The reformer must enforce the law sensibly if he wants to be successful. If he is impatient, the law will remain a dead letter.

The trustees of a temple are not its owners. When the builders of temples throw them open to the general public, their title to ownership extinguishes. Then the devotees become the owners. The devotees are those who worship or make a show of worship in the temples. From this point of view Swami Narayan, Jain and other temples are assumed to belong to the Hindus. I have myself visited these temples. Nobody tries to ask whether I or hundreds like me have a right to visit the temples. It is enough if I look like a Hindu. Therefore, if the Hindus can enter those temples, Harijans have the same right. People going under the name of Harijans do not constitute a separate caste today. They come under 4 or 18 *varnas*.¹ Enlightened public opinion endorses this view. The law recognizes this status of Harijans. Any opinion to the contrary will not hold water today. It is the devotees who put life into the deities. If they are virtuous, their God must be virtuous.

Obstinacy is not devotion

There is another letter which is anonymous. The writing is laboured and the language is unnatural. The writer says, "We wanted to pay reverence to Swami Satyanarayan on Sankranti day, but the temple had been locked since 8 o'clock in the morning. If we cannot enjoy the right to visit a temple in free India, when shall we acquire that right? When the matter was repeatedly referred to Congressmen, they simply went round the place for a few minutes and came back. They made no efforts

¹ Main social divisions or castes among Hindus.

to get the temple opened. Poor Harijans are sitting tight before the temple in cold and sunshine. How should we proceed in the matter ?”

Bapu : “This letter is no doubt strongly worded, but I do not understand the insistence of Harijans. Those who are sitting tight are not true devotees. They want to fight for their right rather than pay reverence to the deity, and, therefore, they are far from having any religious sentiments. The sender has not signed the letter. He has got it written by somebody else. A true devotee follows in the footsteps of Nandnar. Nandnar had no one to help him except God. The same Nandnar is now devoutly worshipped by the Brahmans, who claim the highest status for themselves in society. Those who have voluntarily enlisted as Harijans want to pay reverence to Nandnar and likewise those who are Harijans by birth also want to worship him. It should be left to the non-Harijan Hindus to persuade Harijans to visit temples. In other words, Harijans may bathe in the Ganga if the Ganga is brought to their homes by the Hindus. They have no need to go on fast in front of a temple. I regard this as irreligious. Such a fast is mere starvation. It is obstinacy. Thereby one does not earn merit but demerit. All should keep miles away from this sin.”

Bapu went through the other letters in the morning during leisure time.

Independence Day

It being the Independence Day, many people are pouring in to see Bapu. All the leaders came, and besides them Gopichand Bhargava, Prafulla Babu and Annada Babu also came. Panditji gave a party today at his house in celebration of the Indepen-

dence Day. Bapu's weight is stationary at 109 lb. He is now taking vegetables, milk, soup and jaggery in his diet every day. The number of visitors has increased considerably. He is now going through as much work as he used to do before the fast. Today the Working Committee met from 2.30 to 5. Sardar Dada's absence was felt by all. . . . said that . . . wanted to resign his post in the cabinet. Bapu will try to dissuade him.

A report to the effect that . . . is accepting bribes has reached the ears of Bapu. Bapu is much distressed to learn that a top-ranking leader of Bombay is thus making money through the influence of his father or others. We are watching for new developments. Father will have received Bapu's letter at Mahua today and he might have started from there.

Possible under independence only

Pyarelalji translated today's discourse into Hindi and read it out : "Today is the Independence Day. When we were under foreign domination we used to celebrate this day. But we have attained freedom now. Till now our hope of being independent some day was mere wishful thinking, but it has become a reality today. Why should we still celebrate this day ? Is it because our dream has come true ? Today we celebrate this day to see our new hopes fulfilled. Today under independence the seven lac villages of India should prove that they are the wealth of the country. They can prove their true worth only under independence.

A golden opportunity to get justice

"We have to work very hard to lead our country on the path of freedom, keeping in view the equality

of all religions. But I find that we are going in the reverse direction. We resort to strikes on flimsy grounds. We do things that are unworthy of us. This indicates that we must work very hard to fulfil our aspirations. The working class in particular must be conscious of its dignity. The capitalists will pale into insignificance beside the power and dignity of the working class. If workmen are able to recognize their worth, they can assert their right to get full justice for the wrongs done to them. I am distressed to see strikes going on in coal mines and other establishments engaged in producing consumer goods. This causes monetary loss to the whole society and to the workmen themselves. I must make one thing clear in this connection. The strikers may well ask me why I am speechifying to them today when I myself used to organize big strikes. I would like to tell them that in those days we were slaves and had no hope of getting justice as we can hope today. Now we have to think seriously whether we can escape the evils inherent in the dirty politics of the countries of the east and the west. I hope that we shall not give way to heart-burning and present a united front to the world despite the fact that our country has been geographically partitioned into two separate entities.

Controls

“The lifting of controls was heartily welcomed all over the country. But I never suspected that there could be a shortage of cloth in a country where there are so many spinners and weavers. Subsequently control was lifted from fuel also. This has also given a lot of satisfaction to the people.

Gur (jaggery) is now freely sold in the market and its price has come down. Yet a friend writes to me that people in his village are facing a shortage on account of unequal distribution of goods.

They are equally guilty

“Fall from moral principles and corruption is nothing new. To stop this, Government must exercise control of the highest order. Unless every citizen realizes that he has to serve the country, we cannot rise. Those who are not implicated in bribery and manipulation but knowingly connive at such practices are equally guilty.”

Bapu said this in his discourse, because he had received such reports about the leaders of Bombay. They will refrain from this course if they are wise. Otherwise, Bapu will scrutinize the matter further and then they will be nowhere. A certain standard of honesty must be maintained. Bapu is not going to show leniency to anybody. After the prayer Bapu had a long talk with Bapu told him to go to Noakhali again.

Birla Bhawan, New Delhi
27-1-'48

Prayer as usual. Immediately after the prayer Bapu himself wrote and also dictated a note about the position of the Congress. Then he gave it the caption 'Congress Position'. I am quoting his own words here :

We are servants of God

"The Indian National Congress which is the oldest national political organization and which has after many battles fought her non-violent way to freedom cannot be allowed to die. The Congress can only die with the nation. A living organism ever grows, or it dies. The Congress has won political freedom but it has yet to win economic freedom, social and moral freedom. These freedoms are harder than the political, if only because they are constructive, less exciting and not spectacular. All-embracing constructive work evokes the energy of all the units of the millions.

"The Congress has got the preliminary and necessary part of her freedom. The hardest has yet to come. In its difficult ascent to democracy, it has inevitably created rotten boroughs, leading to corruption and creation of institutions popular or democratic only in name. How to get out of the weedy and unwieldy growth ?

"The Congress must do away with its special



Going to the prayer ground in Birla Bhawan with Abha Gandhi and Authoress two or three days prior to his martyrdom.

register of the members, at no time exceeding one crore, not even then easily identifiable. It had an unknown register of millions, who could never be wanted. Its register should now be co-extensive with all the men and women on the voters' rolls in the country. The Congress business should be to see that no false name gets in and no legitimate name is left out. On its own register, the Congress will have a body of the servants of the nation, who would be workers doing the work allotted to them from time to time.

“Unfortunately for the country, they will be drawn chiefly from the city-dwellers, most of whom will be required to work for and in the villages of India. The ranks must be filled in increasing numbers from the villagers.

“These servants will be expected to operate upon and serve the voters, registered according to law, in their own surroundings. Many persons and parties will woo them. The very best will win. Thus, and in no other way, can the Congress regain its fast ebbing unique position in the country. But yesterday, the Congress was unwittingly the servant of the nation, it was *Khudai Khidmatgar*—God's servant. Let the Congress now proclaim to itself and the world that it is only God's servant—nothing more, nothing less. If it engages in the ungainly skirmish for power it will find one fine morning that it is no more. Thank God, the Congress is now no longer in sole possession of the field.

“I have only opened to view the distant scene. If I have the time and health, I hope to discuss in these columns what the servants of the nation can do to raise themselves in the estimation of their

masters, the whole of the adult population, male and female.”

Bapu wrote to . . . , “ ‘I know what is virtue but I am not attached to it ; I know what is vice but I cannot detach myself from it.’ If I could only disprove this in my case ! But this is only possible when I can willingly and gladly endure a shower of bullets. Therefore, I do not think I deserve congratulations for the incident of the 20th instant. That was God’s mercy. But I am quite prepared to obey His order when it does come. I talk of going to Wardha on the 2nd, but I do not myself feel that I would be able to go there at all. Who knows what is going to happen tomorrow ?

“Today I have written a note about the position of the Congress, which you will like to read. I am trying to bring . . . round. . . . says he cannot do without . . . As regards Kashmir, I believe that we need not take our case to Lake Success.

“I was determined to do or die in Delhi. It seems I have achieved something. But still we have to be very cautious.

“I intend to go to Mehrauli today.”

Bapu’s pin-cushion

While Bapu spins, he collects the odds and ends of waste yarn, and stuffs them into a bag made from his old handkerchief. Then he uses it as a pin-cushion. He did this little piece of work today after returning from Mehrauli.

Auliya’s Dargah and Bapu

At 10 o’clock we went to Mehrauli to see the Urs which is held at Qutubuddin Auliya’s¹ Dar-

¹ A Muslim saint.

gah. Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims had assembled there in thousands. Nobody expected that the fair would be so grand. The marble panels of lattice-work in Moti Masjid have been destroyed. We read the verse from the *Koran* which is inscribed near the tomb. The maulvis expressed their deep sense of gratitude to Bapu and wished him good health and long life. Then they requested him to say a few words. Bapu said :

“Brothers and Sisters,

I request the sisters to maintain complete silence and give me a few minutes. I never knew that I shall be called upon to speak here. I came here as a visitor. I was given to understand that this year the fair would not be held on the same grand scale as last year. If this had been the case, I should have been very sorry. I should like to make a humble request to you. All the Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims who have come here in a spirit of true friendship, should resolve in this holy place not to fight among themselves. We shall live as friends and brothers. Then the world will only say that two brothers were fighting with each other but they did not turn enemies. We may well live separately but after all we are the leaves of the same tree. I am not talking of those who worship Satan. I have lived long and nothing is new to me. There are still clashes at some place or another. I read in to-day's paper that the Hindus were massacred in the Frontier Province. All the Muslims of India should feel grieved at this. We should keep our hearts pure and remember that those who have been killed cannot come to life again. Therefore, when we send letters to our friends there, we should write

to them that we will not take revenge for this by killing anyone but we will love you with pure hearts. India will be secure only when we realize this. The purpose of my giving up the fast was that the Hindus and Muslims of Delhi should purify their hearts. If you weaned me from my fast merely to preserve my life, it was certainly wrong on your part."

Readiness to bite off the nose

When we came back from there at 12, Bapu said, "When so many people have been killed in India, I believe more must have been killed in Pakistan, but not fewer. According to the statement of the Pakistan Government 130 people were killed in Peshawar, but I believe many more must have been killed. Yet not a single Muslim in any part of the country declares that this should stop. I must admit that the Sikhs exhibited a good deal more courage than I had expected of them. I must say that in Peshawar people were murdered in cold blood. The UNO people are bent upon telling downright lies. They are prepared to bite off Jawahar's nose. Jawaharlal's good work will be undone if he does not act cautiously."

Bapu was quite exhausted. When he came back, he had his feet washed and applied mud-plaster. We ministered to his comforts as best as we could.

The afternoon was spent in receiving visitors. Prominent among them were the following : Shri Pantji, Maulana Saheb, Maharajkumar of Vijayanagaram, Justice Ramlal, Meharchand Khanna, Panditji, Rameshwariben and others. Shri Meharchand Khanna narrated the happenings in the Fron-

tier Province and gave vent to his feelings of extreme grief.

In today's discourse at the prayer-meeting Bapu said, "Will all the Muslim brothers and sisters present here raise their hands?" But only one hand was raised.

Rank barbarism

Then he talked about Mehrauli. In the congregation there were numerous Hindus and Sikhs of Mehrauli. "This mausoleum was built during the reign of Muslim emperors. Its main feature is its engraved work. The damaging of such engravings of old is not the work of sensible people. When I saw the magnificent tomb of the Auliya in ruins, the thought whether we had degraded ourselves to that extent flashed through my mind. Suppose for a while that more frightful and barbarous atrocities were committed in Pakistan; but need we compete in doing evil deeds? Besides this, I have received a report that in the Frontier Province and Pakistan 130 Hindus and Sikhs were murdered at a certain place in one day and there was wholesale looting in the bargain. I would ask who killed them after all. Nobody can say whether those who were killed were guilty of some crime. But if you take revenge for this horrible massacre here in India, it will most certainly be an act of barbarism. Therefore, we should see to it that we do not commit any such insensible act in the peaceful atmosphere prevailing today. Our Government is fully alive to the work of destruction that is going on in Pakistan.

The value of freedom

"Rajkumari Amrit Kaur came to see me a short

time ago. She is coming *via* Ajmer. She told me that the Harijans of Ajmer were doing what work was allotted to them, but they lived in most filthy surroundings. After all that place is under the rule of our Government. Therefore, Hindu and Sikh officers should visit that locality some day and study the conditions at first hand. Those unfortunate people are Harijans, and that is why they are made to live in foul surroundings. When I was living in Bhangi Colony¹ in Delhi, I found them living in filthy surroundings. But conditions in Ajmer are much worse. We have achieved freedom, but if we do not improve these foul conditions, our freedom will not be worth a pice. Today we have forgotten God. Our sole business is to find fault with others.

To whom shall I appeal ?

“Some people from Mirpur came to me today. They were victimized by raiders. The raiders would carry off their daughters and women and violate them.

“To whom shall I appeal ? I would ask whether there is no limit to such evil-doings. On top of that they declare that they do this in order to liberate Kashmir. One can understand if starving people resort to loot and plunder. But what does the violation of young girls and keeping them on the verge of starvation mean ? Is it enjoined by Islam and the *Koran* ?

“The people who came to me from Mirpur were strong and stout, but they felt humiliated. Jawaharlal is struck with deep grief at their misery. He is

¹ A settlement inhabited by scavangers.

doing his best to prevent any recurrence of this evil. But what consolation can those people who have been deprived of their property and their dear ones derive from his efforts ? About fifteen relatives of those who came to me today are still in the clutches of the raiders. In the name of humanity and in the name of God I appeal to the raiders who are engaged in this nefarious work, and to the Pak Government which is backing them, to redeem their honour and restore the women through their own good sense before anyone makes a demand on them. I have studied Islam and have acquired a good understanding of it. Islam or any other religion of the world does not teach its followers to do such evil deeds. Therefore, we shall not be called devotees of God but of Satan. Your own well-being and that of the world lies in giving up these disgraceful activities."

After the prayer Bapu went for a walk. He was accompanied by Mr Sheeam. Bapu talked to him about Azad Kashmir. Shah Newaz Saheb was also with him. He is willing to go to Kashmir. Subsequently Panditji joined them. He too talked about the happenings at Mirpur. He will consult Mountbatten also on this point tomorrow.

We retired for the night at 9.45.

Birla House, New Delhi
28-1-'48

Imbibe virtues only

During massage Bapu learnt Bengalee. He sat in the bath for some time with his eyes closed and asked me whether I had written to father and when he was expected here. Then I read to him some telegrams and news items concerning the trouble which had started in South Africa.

After his bath he conferred with Rajendra Babu for over an hour. At the prayer-meeting today Bapu will have a dig at . . . about his bribe-taking. . . . thinks that Bapu shows undue favour to me and to But Bapu says, "I am not partial towards anybody. Is there any partiality in this case? Possibly I cannot see my own faults. People should overlook my faults and imbibe my virtues only."

Bapu replies even to young girls like me in a manner that surprises us. Khurshedben came today, therefore Bapu had a talk with her about Pakistan. He had a talk also with Sir Sultan Ahmed about the Frontier Province.

I do not control the Government

The members of the Central Relief Committee came to see Bapu at 2 o'clock. They had a talk about the quota of food-grains allowed to the people and requested Bapu to ask the Government to look into the matter. Bapu replied that the Government

did not act at his bidding and that he could only make a request to Government like them. Banshidharji of Bhavnagar had a talk with Bapu about the groundnut crop. Bapu thinks that Government should control the area under groundnut cultivation, so that the cultivation of food-grains may not suffer in that part.

Today somebody has sent several thousand rupees in a two-anna envelope. Nobody can tell who has sent the money. Bishan Bhai said to Bapu, "Please say something about this at the prayer-meeting, because if people send currency notes for thousands of rupees in a two-anna cover in this way, the money may well be misappropriated or stolen."

Let your actions speak

Nawab Jang Sadiq Ali Khan of Hyderabad has come today. He said to Bapu, "We live under your shelter." Bapu said, "Give that to me in writing and prove it by your actions. It is the duty of the people of Hyderabad, especially of Muslim friends, to condemn strongly the outrages committed on the Hindus in the Frontier Province, Bahawalpur, Sind and other places."

Bapu could not talk to the people who had come from Bahawalpur, because Panditji came in the meantime. Bapu told Bhai Saheb to give a patient hearing to them. He said a few words about them at the prayer-meeting. Really, Bapu is a pillar of strength to the afflicted. He devotes ample time to talk to them. He is sorry when he cannot see them. He says, "I am staying in Delhi for this specific purpose. There are others who can help

them in their distress. But if I am not able to spare time to listen to what they have to say, I am good-for-nothing."

That is why the first thing he said in his discourse today was this :

"I'm sorry I could not meet the people who have come from Bahawalpur. I assure them that somehow or other I will find time to see them. I am, however, striving to help them in every possible way. That is the reason why I have deputed Dr Sushila Nayar to go to Bahawalpur.

"By the grace of God the unity established between the three communities in Delhi still endures. I am grateful to you for your cooperation in this matter.

Message to the Government of Africa

"Today I would like to tell you something about South Africa. Anybody can come to India and settle here. He can own land in any part of the country. Nobody can deprive him of this right, although it is true that we segregate Harijans.

"But in Africa dark or coloured people have no right even to use certain roads, let alone other rights. I have seen it with my own eyes. That is the reason why our countrymen there are fighting for their just rights. There are other ways of fighting, but the Indians domiciled there have given the name of *satyagrah* to their own way of fighting. The Government does not even allow them to migrate from one town to another, for example, Natal, Transvaal, Hill State, Cape Colony, etc. The Continent of Africa is very large. It requires a passport to go from one place to another. This is

very unfortunate. Therefore, some people marched from Natal to Transvaal. I must say that the Government there has been reasonable and courteous in that it has not arrested these men so far. But the people there have heartily welcomed the march. This is a very courageous act on their part. Both Hindus and Muslims are taking part in the march. They live and work in harmony. They will keep on marching until they are arrested. Perhaps later we may have occasion to thank them for their courage. If Indians live there with a sense of responsibility, why should the white men look down upon them? We are also free like them. Therefore, I want to tell the Government of Africa from here that whoever wants to reside at a certain place should be allowed to live there, because he regards it as his own place. I have lived for twenty years in South Africa. Therefore, I regard it as my own country like India.

“The Muslims of Mysore have sent me telegrams setting forth their troubles. In this connection I have also received a telegram from the President of the Legislative Department. He writes that the rights of the Muslims of Mysore are being safeguarded. In this connection I must ask the Muslims not to exaggerate anything in the least.

Don't make this mistake

“Now I will give you an instance of how ignorant our people are. Many people send me money for charitable purposes. These unfortunate people do not know how to remit money. So they post the money in a two-anna envelope. They must be thinking that nobody will open the envelope. In

this connection I recall to my mind a story of my boyhood. Father had a valuable jewel and he put it in an envelope and posted it in the same way. When he did not receive an acknowledgment of that letter, he grew anxious. He had to wire to know what had happened. In the same way, if the letter miscarries and the money gets into wrong hands, the donor's charity will not serve its purpose and he will lose his money as well. Therefore, nobody should make this mistake."

After the prayer Bapu had a talk with Rajkumariben. She asked, "Were there any noises at your prayer-meeting today, Bapu?" Bapu replied, "No. But does that question mean that you are worrying about me? If I am to die by the bullet of a mad man, I must do so smilingly. There must be no anger within me. God must be in my heart, and on my lips. And if anything happens, you are not to shed a single tear. . . ."

After this Bapu talked about the cabinet. Then he washed his feet, took exercise and went to bed.

A telegram from my father was received in the evening, informing us of his arrival here on the 31st morning. Bapu said, "That is all right. He must come here, because my going to Wardha is still uncertain. If he likes it, he can accompany me to Wardha. From there he can go direct to Mahua if he wishes. It is wise of him that he is coming here instead of going to Wardha."

Bapu had his massage. Today my notes are very sketchy.

We got ready to retire for the night at 9.45. After finishing all my work I went to bed at 10.45. The severity of cold has not abated.

With Rabindranath Tagore
at Santiniketan.



Birla Bhawan, New Delhi

29-1-'48

Death is a true friend

Prayer at 3.30 as usual. . . . was not up at prayer time. Bapu asked us not to wake her up. He said to me, "I do not want to sit in judgment on anybody now. Let everyone do one's duty according to one's lights. That will be good for me as well as for you all. You shouldn't talk to. . . about it any more."

Then Bapu made some corrections in the letters written by Chandwaniji. Chandwaniji does not know Hindi well, nor can he make out Bapu's English writing. Brevity is the soul of Bapu's style. But Chandwaniji's writings are marked with verbosity. He told me only yesterday, "To live with Bapu is to walk on the blade of a sword."

Then Bapu wrote a letter on the death of Sulochanaben to her father at Sevagram :

"I received the news of your daughter Sulochana's passing away through dear Kishorlal. I could not learn about it earlier. What shall I write ? How can I console you ? Death is a true friend. Our ignorance is the cause of our unhappiness. Sulochana's soul existed yesterday, it exists today and it will exist tomorrow. The body must perish. Sulochana has departed with her faults and has left her virtues behind. We cannot forget her. Be more careful in doing your duty.

Blessings from Bapu"

“Dear Kishorlal,

Today I am devoting my time after the prayer to replying to letters. It was right that you informed me of the death of Shankarji's daughter. I have written to him about it. The news of my coming there is a mere myth, although I am thinking of staying there from the 3rd to the 12th. How long I shall stay at Delhi is not definite, and so the question of keeping my promise does not arise. It all depends on the wish of my co-workers here. Probably they will come to a decision tomorrow. I am gaining strength. At this time my kidneys and liver are both out of order. In my view the reason is that I have not repeated the name of Rama often enough.

Blessings from Bapu”

Jayaprakash and Bapu

After finishing his correspondence Bapu went off to sleep at 5.40. Later Jayaprakashji and Prabhavatiben came to see Bapu on the eve of their departure from Delhi. Bapu told them what made him unhappy. He said, “If the socialists, who fought tooth and nail against the British for freedom, cooperate in this age of freedom also, socialism will shine in all its glory.” They had pledged that so long as Bapu was alive they would always carry out his commands. Bapu, however, does not believe in ‘commands’ but in ‘duty’. It is hard to find faithful and wise men like Jayaprakash. Bapu is a seeker after virtues and that is why he regards him as his close associate.

In the bath Bapu enquired about all of us. I said, “I am younger than . . . Hence when you

say to me something about her, she doesn't like it. You must give her time to talk to you direct." Bapu said, "I do not mind the disparity in age. But it is very difficult to take work from her. I will spare some time for her today. Why doesn't she tell me herself?"

At meal time Bapu had a private talk with . . . for three quarters of an hour. Padmajaben, Krishnaben Hathi Singh, Indiraben Gandhi and Taraben (Daughter of Shrimati Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit) came at 10.30. Poking fun at them, Bapu said (because they were all members of the Nehru family), "Hello ! Are these princesses come to see me ?" They all shook with laughter. Bapu asked them to sit wherever they liked. In that cold weather, Bapu was sitting out in the sun with his Noakhali hat on. He questioned them about the affairs of their respective families. Padmajaben asked, "Is it a Burmese hat, Bapu ?" Bapu said, "An elegant Burmese hat is on its way. Shall I not look very handsome in that hat ?" All had a hearty round of jokes. At last Bapu said, "You girls, all of you vanish now, otherwise people waiting outside will curse you." . . . sought an interview with Bapu in private, because he did not like to talk in the presence of others. Bapu said, "It is now difficult to see people individually. You can see me only among a group of visitors."

After this local Maulanas came in. Bapu discussed with them the conditions prevailing in the Frontier Province and Sind. Delhi is very quiet now.

Application of mud, spinning and other things are going on as usual. Sudhirdas brought the news published in the *London Times* that disagreement existed between Panditji and Sardar Dada. Bapu

knows well that somebody is sowing the seeds of dissension among us, but why should we make a to-do about it ? Bapu will say so to both of them. Then the Dewan of Gwalior and Shrinivasji came. Shrinivasji had a discussion about scarcity of food-grains in Madras.

Miss Margaret visits Bapu

Shrimati Rajen Nehru is going to America ; hence she came to say goodbye to Bapu. Miss Margaret came at 2.30. She introduced herself as a 'Torturer'. She is a press reporter. She knew me because she had been at Noakhali for some time. She sought Bapu's views on trusteeship. Bapu said in reply : "A trustee is one who discharges the obligations of his trust faithfully and in the best interests of his wards."

Then she asked, "Do you know of anybody in India who comes up to that standard ?"

Bapu said, "No—though some instance my host, Shri G. D. Birla. I hope he is not deceiving me. If I see him do so, I would not live under his roof."

Then she put another question : "Do you stick to your desire to live upto the age of 125 years ?"

Bapu said, "I have lost that hope because of the terrible happenings in the world. I don't want to live in darkness."

Bapu had allowed her only two minutes for the interview, but today he had ample time. She herself had taken Bapu's photographs which she put before Bapu for his autograph, and at the same time she put her last question : "Would you advise America to give up the manufacture of atom bombs ?"

Bapu said emphatically :

“Most certainly. As things are, the war ended disastrously and the victors are vanquished by jealousy and lust for power. Already a third war is being canvassed which may prove even more disastrous. *Ahimsa*¹ is a mightier weapon by far than the atom bomb. Even if the people of Hiroshima could have died in their thousands with prayer and goodwill in their hearts, the situation would have been transformed as if by a miracle.”

Bapu thought that her inquisitiveness could not be satisfied. Therefore, while autographing the last photo he looked at his watch and said, “The two minutes’ time I gave you has long since been exceeded. Look, it is many seconds past.”

Immediately after this another American woman came in to see Bapu. She is the General Secretary of the World Headquarters of the YWCA. She lives in Switzerland. She has come on a visit to India. She is greatly interested in the social, economic and moral problems of India. She wanted to learn from Bapu how she could serve India best and how she could see India from that point of view.

Bapu said, “American visitors should endeavour to see India by going round and offer friendly and constructive criticism but to describe its dirty spots as India would be a caricature.”

In this context Bapu remembered Emily Kinnaired and said, “She came to see me on her own and used to go with me to the prayer-meetings. She was a perfect vegetarian. I had a useful exchange of

¹ Non-violence.

letters with her on the subject of self-realization, till her death."

After this, in answer to a question about the Christians of India, Bapu said, "The best course would be to leave them to their own resources to help them settle down as sons of the soil."

The voice of God

After this some blind people came in. They had come from Pakistan to receive Bapu's blessings. Then came people from Bannu. They narrated their tale of distress in great anger and excitement. An old man asked Bapu to repair to the Himalayas. But Bapu said in a rather harsh tone, "My Himalayas are here. To remove your sufferings and to die in your service is tantamount to going to the Himalayas for me."

Their talk produced such a deep impression on Bapu that, when starting for the prayer, he said to me, "Take this to be a death warrant for you and me. Those very people who obeyed me to the letter and revered me from their hearts ask me now to go to the Himalayas. The pitiful cry of these people is like the voice of God to us who are participating in this sacrifice. I am telling this to you alone, because Pyarelal, Sushila, Abha, Chand, Deva and Bishan, who also are my comrades in this sacrifice, are not present here. Only you are tagged to me. Therefore, how can I hide from you the voice of my soul?"

Bapu looked very sick at heart. Moreover, other things about the charge of bribery against . . . also cropped up.

Today we were so busy that we could hardly breathe freely. Bapu is drafting a constitution for

the Congress. Chandwaniji had made a thorough mess of the post-prayer discourse. Therefore, Bapu had to rewrite it. This was an addition to his labour. He is now very tired but all work must be finished.

[Today's post-prayer discourse of Bapu proved to be his last discourse on earth. Similarly, his ideas about the Congress constitution, jotted down in an inauspicious hour, proved to be the last. I am reproducing both of them here.]

"There are many topics to dwell upon but I have selected six of them. I will say as much as I can in 15 minutes. I find that I am a little late in coming to this place, I ought not to have been late.

Clarification of a misunderstanding

"Sushilaben has gone to Bahawalpur. There has been some misunderstanding about it. She has gone there to see the distressed people. She has no authorisation, nor could she have any. She has gone there with Mr Leslie Cross of the Friends' Service. At first I thought of sending a member of the Friends' Unit there to meet the people to make enquiries and report to me. At that time there was no intention of sending Sushilaben there. But when she learnt that hundreds of people were lying ill there, she asked me whether she could go. I liked it very much. When she was working in Noakhali, she came in contact with the Friends' Unit. Moreover, she is a competent doctor and belongs to Gujranwala district in the Punjab. She has also suffered a great loss because she had a lot of landed property there. She knows both Urdu and English and therefore she can help Mr Cross.

“Of course, there is danger in going there. But she said, ‘I don’t mind the danger. If I had thought of danger, I should not have gone to Noakhali. Many people have been killed in the Punjab and their families have been ruined. But I have not suffered that fate. I get my daily bread. God’s will is supreme. So if you allow me to go there and Mr Cross takes me with him, I shall be able to meet the people there.’

“When I asked Mr Cross whether I could send Sushila with him, he was very pleased. He said, ‘This is a very good suggestion. Through her help I should be able to talk freely to the people there. It will be a great thing to have with me an Indian who is acquainted with that part of the country. If Sushilaben can accompany me, nothing can be more helpful.’ Mr Cross belongs to the Red Cross Society. This Society was formed to give medical aid to soldiers wounded in war. But now its members render help in many other ways.

“Now the question arises whether Dr Sushila is accompanying Mr Cross or the latter is accompanying the former. The question seems rather baffling, but it is not really so. They are both friends. They have gone there in a spirit of service, not to earn money. Mr Cross is my friend and Sushila is my daughter. I am her father. I have not sent her to exalt her. Nobody should think that she is a doctor while Mr Cross is not. Nobody should discriminate between them as being senior and junior partners. If a woman accompanies Mr Cross, he keeps her in the forefront, himself remaining in the background. But in selfless service no distinction

is made as to seniority or juniority. If a distinction can be made at all, Cross is the senior partner. Sushila has gone with him to assist him. Both of them will make a report to me on their return.

“Nawab Saheb has written to me that many people send me false reports and that I should not rely on them. Therefore, I thought of making an independent enquiry. Hence I sent Mr Cross and Sushila to Bahawalpur. The Muslims of that place have informed me by wire of the arrival of Mr Cross and Sushila, who will submit to me a true report on their return. They were due here three or four days back. But some important business must have detained them there.

Whom should I listen to ?

“Some men and women from Bannu came to see me lately. There were some forty persons. They were certainly in trouble but not so crippled as to be unable to walk. Some of them had wounds on their fingers while the rest had other injuries. I was only able to have a look at them and asked them to tell the story of their misfortune to Brij Krishnaji, and I gave them to understand that they were not out of my mind. They were all respectable people. It was natural that they were fired with anger, but they fell in with my suggestion. There was a certain man among them who—I can’t say, nor did I care to enquire—may have been a refugee or somebody else. He said, ‘You have wrecked everything. Will you go on like this ? You had better get you gone. You may be a great *mahatma* but what is it to us ? You endanger our safety. Leave us alone, forget us, be gone !’ I asked him, ‘Where to go ?’ He said, ‘Betake yourself to the Himalayas !’ I chided him. He was not as aged as I.

“He was full-grown and robust. He could easily liek up half a dozen men like me. I am but a *mahatma*, only skin and bone. By becoming nervous I would have been nowhere. Therefore, I said to him with a smile, ‘Shall I go away at your bidding? Whom shall I listen to? Some ask me to stay here while others tell me to go away. Some reprove and revile me, whereas others extol me. What am I to do then? Therefore, I do what God eommands me to do. You may say you do not believe in God, but at least let me obey my eonscience. If you claim to be God, what will be the position of God? There is only one God. Of course, it is right to speak of *panch-parmeshwar*.¹ But here we are not coneerned with arbitrators or judges. God is the guardian of people in distress but God Himself is not in distress. When I claim that every woman is my sister or my daughter, her distress is my distress. Why do you suppose that I am not aware of your distress and that I am an enemy of Hindus and Sikhs and a friend of Muslimís?”

I obey God’s word

“That fellow poured out his heart in sincere words. But some people write to me in abusive language while others in sober words: ‘Let us alone even if we go to hell. Why do you poke your nose into our affairs? Get gone!’ But how ean I get away at another’s bidding? I am not a henchman to carry out another’s behests, nor can I extinguish myself at another’s bidding. God has made me as I am. He will do what He wills. He ean put an

¹ A committee of five (or more) men who sit in judgment and are regarded as gods or infallible beings.

end to my life if it pleases Him. I think I obey the word of God. Why don't I make for the Himalayas? That region will suit me—not that I shall lack food and clothing there. I shall live there in peace. But I seek peace amidst disorder. Otherwise, I wish to die in the midst of that disorder. My Himalayas are here. If you all go to the Himalayas at all, do take me with you.

“I have received lengthy complaints from the organizers of refugee camps here and the complaints are true. They say that the refugees staying in camps here are being provided with food and clothing as far as possible but they do not want to work. I would like to say to them, as I have already said, that, if the distressed people want to be relieved of their distress, if they want to turn their sufferings into comfort, if they want to serve India even in their distress,—and they will serve themselves at the same time,—then they must work hard to earn a living. A distressed person has no right to idle away his time and seek pleasure. It says in the *Gita* : ‘Earn by the sweat of your brow and eat ; make sacrifices and eat what is left over.’ Don't think that this rule applies to you and not to me. It simply won't do to loaf about and eat. Even a millionaire who does not work and simply eats is good for nothing and a burden on earth. Of course, it is a different thing if a person is maimed or crippled, blind or old. But if a person is robust, there is no reason why he should not work. Therefore, those who are able-bodied must work. Robust men who are staying in camps may well do scavenging and spinning. Those who can, must work. Those who are not skilled in any art, can teach boys. They

must keep themselves employed. But if anybody should say that his children must receive the same education as he and his grand-father received at Cambridge, and that he would send his children there, how can that be possible? In the end, I would say that all refugees must earn their living, they must do some work.

A farmer will be the Governor-General of India

“A friend came to see me today. I do not remember his name. He talked of farmers. I said, “If I could have my way, I would instal a farmer as our Governor-General, because the farmer is our king. I was taught in my childhood a verse which means ‘O farmer, thou art emperor’. If the farmer may not raise produce from land, what shall we eat? He is the real king of India. But we have turned him into a slave. What is he to do? Should he become a B.A. or an M.A.? If so, that will spell his ruin. He will no longer be able to wield the spade. If the man who earns his living by tilling the soil were made a General or President, the face of India would change. He will not rot then, as he is doing today.

“Madras is suffering from scarcity of food-grains. The Government of Madras has sent an emissary to Jairamdasji with a request for supply of grain to that drought-stricken area. I am sorry to learn about the drought in Madras. I would tell the people of Madras that they can get enough food in their own state by increasing the produce of ground-nuts, coconuts and other things. They have also an abundance of fish, which is eaten by most of them.

What reason have they to beg for food from outside ? It is not right for them to insist on getting rice, and polished rice at that, which loses all its vitamins, or perforce to eat wheat when rice is not available. They can mix groundnut or coconut powder with rice flour. What they need is self-reliance and faith. I know the Madrasis well. In South Africa people of Madras State speaking different tongues accompanied me on the march to offer *satyagrah*. They were allowed only 1½ lb. of bread and one oz. of sugar as their daily ration. But wherever they encamped for the night, they picked up edible things from the scrub of the woods and, to my great surprise, cooked and ate them with relish. How can such resourceful people feel the pinch ? Of course, we were all labourers. Our salvation and the satisfaction of our needs lies in working honestly.”

The Testament

Bapu has gone through the script of his discourse, but had no time to correct it. In the meantime he drafted the following memorandum for the guidance of the Congress. [This also proved to be his last wish ; therefore, I am reproducing it here in Bapu’s own words.]

“Though split into two, India having attained the political independence through means devised by the Indian National Congress, the Congress, in its present shape and form, *i.e.*, as a propaganda vehicle and a parliamentary machine, has outlived its use. India has still to attain social, moral and economic independence in terms of its seven hundred thousand villages as distinguished from its cities

and towns. The struggle for the ascendancy of civil over military power is bound to take place in India's progress towards its democratic goal. It must be kept out of unhealthy competition with the political parties and communal bodies. For these and other similar reasons, the all-India Congress Committee resolves to disband the existing Congress organisation and flower into a Lok Sevak Sangh¹ under the following rules with power to alter them as occasion may demand.

Every Panchayat of five adult men or women, being villagers or village-minded, shall form a working party, under a leader elected from among themselves.

When there are one hundred such Panchayats, the fifty first grade leaders shall elect, from among themselves, a second grade leader and so on, the first-grade leaders in the meanwhile working under the second grade leaders. Parallel groups of two hundred Panchayats shall continue to be formed, till they cover the whole of India, each succeeding group of Panchayats electing second grade leaders after the manner of the first. All second grade leaders shall serve jointly for the whole of India and severally for their respective areas. The second grade leaders may elect, wherever they deem necessary, from among themselves, a chief who will, during leisure, regulate and command all the groups.

(As the final formation of provinces or districts is still in a state of flux, no attempt has been made to divide this group of servants into provincial or district councils and jurisdiction over the whole of

¹ People's Service League.

India has been vested in the group or groups that may have been formed at any given time. It should be noted that this body of servants derive their authority or power from service ungrudgingly and wisely done to their master, the whole of India.)

1. Every worker shall be a habitual weaver of *khadi* made from self-spun yarn as certified by the A. I. S. A. and must be a teetotaler. If a Hindu, he must have eschewed untouchability in any shape or form in his own person or in his family and must be a believer in the ideal of inter-communal unity, equal respect and regard for all religions, equality of opportunity and status for all, irrespective of race, creed or sex.

2. He shall come in personal contact with every villager within his jurisdiction.

3. He shall enrol and train workers from among the villagers and keep a register of all these.

4. He shall keep a record of his work from day to day.

5. He shall organise the villages as so to make them self-contained and self-supporting through their agriculture and handicrafts.

6. He shall educate village folk in sanitation and hygiene and take all measures for prevention of ill health and disease among them.

7. He shall organise the education of the village folk from birth to death along the lines of the Nai Talim,¹ in accordance with the policy laid down by the Hindustani Talimi Sangh.

8. He shall see that those whose names are mis-

¹ Basic education.

sing on the statutory voters' roll are duly entered therein.

9. He shall encourage those who have not yet acquired the legal qualification, to acquire it for getting the right of franchise.

10. For the above purposes and others to be added from time to time, he shall train and fit himself in accordance with the rules laid down by the Sangh for the due performance of duty.

The Sangh shall affiliate the following autonomous bodies :

1. All India Spinners' Association. 2. All India Village Industries Association. 3. Hindustani Talimi Sangh. 4. Harijan Sevak Sangh. 5. Go-Seva Sangh.

Finance

The Sangh shall raise finances for the fulfilment of its mission from among the villagers and others, special stress being laid on collection of the poor man's pice."

The bloom in the world's garden is short-lived

In the evening Sohan Singhji, the Chief Minister of Hyderabad, and others came to see Bapu. Bapu conferred with Maulana Saheb for a long time.

Bapu was feeling very tired at night but he finished the draft of the Congress constitution. He got up to wash his feet at 9.15 as usual and then made ready to go to bed. He was so exhausted that he forgot to take exercise. When I reminded him, he took it.

Later, I massaged Bapu's head with oil. After a silence of two minutes he complained of feeling giddy. Then he began to talk about the taking of bribes by . . .'s son. He said, "How can we look the

world in the face ? The honour of the whole nation hinges on those who have participated in the freedom struggle. If they too misuse their powers, we are sure to lose our footing. How long can we keep our honour in this way ? To me what we have achieved is not real freedom, yet by such actions we are tainting whatever semblance of freedom we have secured. Where do I stand and what am I doing ? How can I get peace of mind out of these disturbed conditions ?

“The bloom in the world’s garden is short-lived, Enjoy it so long as it lasts.”

A false or true mahatma ?

Having said this, Bapu began to cough. Tears welled up in my eyes to see his condition. Alas ! Bapu’s anguish is growing day by day. For him there is now no one to fall back upon except God. While he was coughing, I asked quietly, “Why not take a lozenge of penicillin ? Sushilaben has left some with me. Otherwise, you may get an attack of influenza.”

As I said this, Bapu felt more distressed and said, “You alone are my partner and helper in this sacrifice. Till now I have not given such motherly counsel to anybody except you. I struggled through life for your sake. I threw you in the sacrificial fire and you emerged safe and sound. The virtues I saw in you, I did not find in any other girl. Therefore, I want to tell you what I have told a number of times before. If I were to die of disease or even a pimple, you must shout to the world from house-tops that I was a false *mahatma*. Then my soul, wherever it might be, will rest in peace. People

might well swear at you for my sake ; yet, if I died of illness, you should declare me a false or hypocritical *mahatma*. And if an explosion took place, as it did last week, or somebody shot at me and I received his bullet on my bare chest, without a sigh and with Rama's name on my lips, only then you should say that I was a true *mahatma*. This will benefit the Indian people."

Not repeating Rama's name

I was giving massage to Bapu all alone. Perfect silence prevailed and Bapu was uttering these heart-rending words. I had not the heart to say anything. My heart was too full for words and my throat was choked. I went to the kitchen to fetch water. Just then . . . of the Ashram came. She is not keeping good health. So she intends to go to her village. Bapu said, "If Rama's name had been inscribed on your heart, you would not have fallen ill. But it presupposes faith." Bapu told this to her son also.

She began to talk of the complicated affair of Chandben's marriage. By means of signs we told her that Bapu was very tired and feeling giddy. We asked Bapu also to forbear from talking. But, since he is Bapu to all, he did not mind what we said and went on talking. Fortunately, Devadas Kaka and Kaki came just then. Bapu cracked jokes with him and with aunt too. As usual, Bapu said, "Tell me if there is any fresh news ?" Then Kaka and Bapu began to talk about the present situation in Delhi. Therefore, I came away from there to write these notes. At this time neither Sushilaben nor Pyarelalji was with Bapu. Therefore, Kaka had

a good opportunity to talk to Bapu. He always complains, "All people can see Bapu freely whenever they like but I never get such a chance, nor do I like to avail myself of it."

Papers have published the news of Bapu's going to Wardha. Bapu said, "I don't know which Bapu or which Gandhi will be going to Wardha. Ask the press reporters. I don't know whether I shall go to Wardha at all."

Bapu fell asleep at about 11. I will also go to bed in half an hour. Bapu has no ordinary burden on his mind. He is helpless, since everything is topsy turvy.

Birla Bhawan, New Delhi
30-1-'48

As usual, Bapu got up for prayer and woke me up. . . . ben did not get up. Sushilaben is not here these days and so I have to recite the *Gita*. Whenever Bhai Saheb and Pyarelalji are awake they join their voices with us. . . . cannot pronounce the verses from the *Gita*. . . . did not get up. Therefore, Bapu, while cleaning his teeth, remarked, "I find that my influence is waning even on those who stay close to me. Prayer is a broom to clean one's soul with. I have inviolable faith in prayer. If she does not like to pray with me, she had better leave my roof. It will be good for both of us. If you can pluck up courage, tell this to her on my behalf. Make it clear to her that I do not like this. I wish God did not keep me alive any more to witness all this. Today I want you to chant this hymn to me :

‘Whether tired or not,

O man ! do not take rest.’

I was surprised to find that Bapu liked this song today for the first time. I feel that it is rather strange on Bapu's part. Sometimes I am afraid that Bapu may go on fast again. Sardar Dada is to come this afternoon on some special business. He will be closetted with Bapu. A meeting of the cabinet will be called for tomorrow or the day after

¹ O God !

and all outstanding matters will be settled. Let us see how far they will be successful. Father is coming tomorrow morning.

After the prayer I led Bapu from the verandah, to his room. I covered him with a wrap. Then Bapu sat up to revise the draft of the Congress constitution which he had prepared last night. As usual, he took hot water, honey and lemon juice at 4.45 and 16 oz. of orange juice at 5.45. Weakness caused by the fast still persists. While writing, Bapu felt exhausted and fell into a nap. I pressed his feet.

The letter which Bapu wrote to Kishorlalbhai could not be copied out and was found mixed up with the other papers of Bapu. Bapu did not like this. I mildly asked him, "Shall I add a line, saying that we shall be going to Wardha on the 2nd?" Bapu said, "Who knows what will happen tomorrow? If my going there is finally settled, I will announce it at the prayer-meeting. Also, when the record is relayed at night, the news will be included in it. But the letter should not have remained unposted like this. This is undoubtedly Bishan's duty but you cannot be absolved of your responsibility in any business which concerns me. I will hold you answerable for the faults of others also, if you do not demur to it." I said, "I must admit the fault." Bapu was pleased.

When Bapu was about to go for a walk, Shrimati Rajen Nehru came. I had no mind to go out, but Bapu insisted on my accompanying them.

He had his bath and massage at 8 according to sehcdule. During the massage he read the papers

and learnt Bengalee. Then he was led from the massage room to the bath. At that time he said to Pyarelalji, "Last night I prepared a draft of the Congress constitution for publication in the *Harijan*. Go through it carefully and, if any details have been looked over, supply them. I drafted it while I was thoroughly tired."

As usual I was helping Bapu in his bath, when he said to me, "Do you give exercise to your arms?" I answered, "No." Thereupon he said, "I do not like it at all." I said, "Then I must do it." Bapu said, "Certainly. You are not gaining weight and not keeping well either. It pains me. When you came to Noakhali from your father's house, how healthy you were ! You have an emotional and impressionable nature and that is why your health does not improve. One should not be unduly dejected at another's misfortune nor unduly jubilant at another's good fortune. By maintaining a judicious balance between the two, one can find it easier to approach God. This rule is not framed by me ; it has come down to us from time immemorial and is found in all sacred books. This is said to be one of the ways of making man self-satisfied. You are a budding girl of 18. You cannot realize at this stage how much strength of character I have developed in you. From the day you came to Noakhali till now I have put you to a thorough test and made you pass through trying experiences of all sorts. You may well not realize the value of all this today, but keep a permanent record of these words of mine, since they will stand you in good stead in your future life, whether I live or pass away.

“You know that . . . did not get up at prayer time today. I am brooding over my own shortcomings in this sacrifice. Other girls or men are not my partners in this sacrifice. You alone serve me and take upon yourself the responsibility of carrying me through my daily business. You never miss anything. But to keep yourself in good health is also a part of your service to me. Therefore, you must discharge this responsibility also.” While bathing, Bapu said these words to me with great affection and also caressed my back.

Bapu was weighed when he came out of the bath. His weight came to 109½ lb. The menu for lunch included boiled vegetables, 12 oz. of milk, juice of about five ripe tomatoes and four oranges. While eating he talked to Pyarelalji about Noakhali. Pyarelalji questioned him about exchange of population and Bapu gave the following straightforward answer :

“We have selected Noakhali as our field of work, keeping in mind the watchword, ‘Do or die’. Though I am here, our work in Noakhali is going on. We should encourage the people of Noakhali to stay where they are to preserve their self-respect and honour. It may happen that ultimately only a handful of men will remain there, but there is no other way to show that we are strong although we are numerically weak. Even in an armed conflict the rank and file perish. A non-violent struggle cannot be different.” Thus, Bapu exhorted him to go to Noakhali.

While he was having his feet massaged with ghee, Bapu fell into a nap. When he woke

up, I saw him coming from the wooden board to the bath-room. I said, "Bapu, how well you look, walking by yourself!" (Because of weakness Bapu had not dared to walk about all these days without someone else's support.) Bapu returned, "Certainly! I look well, don't I? 'Foot it alone!'"

Dr Bhargava wants a house to set up a nursing home in it. Somebody suggested that the building of the Muslim orphanage was available. Bapu said, "Remind me of this when the local Muslims come here." Then he said, "How long will the Government act in fear of me? They should do things on their own initiative, not through fear of me." The local Muslims came and we reminded Bapu. But the Muslims said, "It would be better if the orphanage building was not put to any other use." Bapu said, "All right. I only asked by the way. We need not waste time over it."

After this Maulana Rehman referred to Bapu's proposed visit to Sevagram and said, "You may go there but be sure to come back on the 14th." Bapu said, "Yes, I will be here on the 14th. But everything depends on the will of God."

There was once a proposal to prepare a biography of Mahadeo Bhai by editing his diary. Bapu had a talk about it with Shanti Kumar Bhai. Shanti Kumar Bhai complained that a dispute had arisen between Chandra Shankar Bhai and the Navjivan Press. It's a question of demanding more money.

Bapu said, "Everywhere I see that people are quarrelling, as the Yadavas quarrelled among themselves and ruined their tribe. Nobody seems to think what harm we do to the society by quarrel-

ling among ourselves. What can you or anybody else do to set matters right? All this is due to my own shortcomings. If God has blinded me to such things, what can anybody do? But I will reform these things as far as I can in my life-time so that the future generation may not curse me. I shall be thankful to God if I can do this much.

“I should take this work in my own hand. The diary must be edited carefully into book form. Narhari is not keeping good health. Moreover, he has given up doing my work altogether. But how can I say he has done so without thinking over the matter carefully, because everybody is free to hold his own opinion? If Chandra Shankar is keen to take this responsibility, he will incur all expenditure. Their handwritings are very similar. I will write to him.”

Bapu gave his autograph to Dr Silba and his daughter who went to Ceylon as special delegates.

He asked Bishanbhai to help him finish in the afternoon all the correspondence that had been held over. He applied mud-plaster at 2. I pressed his feet. Then he took off the mud-plaster. We took Bapu's permission and went to see a relation in the city. We came back at 4.15.

If I remain alive

Bapu and Sardar Dada were talking together. The affairs of Kathiawar were also discussed. Just then Rasikbhai Parikh and Dhebarbhai, leaders of Kathiawar, arrived. They wanted to see Bapu. But Bapu had not a minute to spare. Even so, I told them that I would get a time fixed for their interview after consulting Bapu. Bapu and Sardar

Dada were completely absorbed in conversation. When I announced the Kathiawar leaders to Bapu, he said, "Tell them that, if I remain alive, they can talk to me after the prayer on my walk." I asked them to wait till prayer time, because, if they did not see him immediately after the prayer, somebody else might force his way in and they might lose their chance to see him. They decided to wait and took their seats in Bapu's room.

[Since writing the above, I am writing my diary on 1st February after 2 a.m. I am at a loss to know what to write. The whole Birla House is reverberating with cries of wailing. Hark ! Maybe, Bapu is asleep. Will he get up to reprove me for sitting up so late at my desk ? But, no ! Bapu, you never excused my fault even for a moment ; what makes you so charitable today ? Woe to me ! You would often say that we two were the only partners in this sacrifice and that you would never forsake me though I might forsake you. But today, O Bapu, it's you who have forsaken me. Father is coming here tomorrow. Did you write to him four days back on purpose to deliver me back to him ? How bewildering ! Panditji's bewailing is apt to rend the heart of even the most hardened stoic. Little Gopu¹ is saying, "Manuben, why is Grandpa still asleep ?"]

Whether tired or not !

Bapu was so deeply absorbed in conversation with Sardar Dada that he was late for the prayer by ten minutes. Nobody dared to disturb him in

¹ Gandhiji's grandson.

that grave mood. At last Maniben mustered courage, because we all knew that, if Bapu were not reminded of the right time, he would be displeased. While talking, Bapu ate his meal. His menu included 14 oz. of goat's milk, 4 oz. of vegetable juice and three oranges. During the conversation he did his spinning also. Bread eaten without labour is stolen bread. Therefore, how could he forego spinning? In the small hours of the morning today he asked me to sing this song which had never been sung before : 'Whether tired or not, O man, do not take rest !' Does he want to give a demonstration of it in his own life ? Be that as it may, without a moment's delay he further animated his already lively spirit and at once rose to his feet.

The duty of nurses

As usual, I picked up in my hands Bapu's pen, his rosary, his spittoon, his case for glasses and the note-book in which I write his discourses. On the way Bapu expressed his displeasure at being late by ten minutes, saying, "You people are my watch. Why should I consult a watch then ?" Particularly these days Bapu never consults his watch. He finishes his daily duties one by one in a regular manner without timing them to a watch. One of us winds his watch. That is why he said so. I said, "Bapu, your watch must be getting lean through negligence." His aforesaid quip was in reply to this remark of mine. He said that in joke, but, joking apart, he also said, "I do not like such delay at all."

He suggested that Chandben should stay at Delhi. Then he said, "I have increased the quantity of my diet just a little. It is not advisable to

take cereals yet after the fast, but I must now reduce the quantity of liquid food." While saying this he ascended the stairs of the prayer-ground. He added, "I am late for the prayer by ten minutes ; you people are in fault for this." Since Sardar Dada had come on a visit after an interval of several days and he was discussing important topics, we did not dare disturb them ; but Bapu did not like this. He said, "It is incumbent on nurses to do their duty even though God Himself were present by the patient's bedside. When it is time to administer medicine to a patient and the nurse hesitates to go to the patient for some reason or other, the patient may well die. This is a parallel instance. I cannot tolerate even one minute's delay at prayer."

It has been a long-established practice that, while Bapu walks to the prayer-ground, we serve the purpose of his stick. If we ever grumbled and did not want to serve as a stick according to this practice, Bapu would catch hold of us and forcibly use us as his stick. When he walked back, other girls served the same purpose.

Hei Rama !

Bapu climbed up four stairs and looked up. Then, lifting his hands off our shoulders, he folded them to greet the assembled people, and walked on. I was walking on his right. From the same direction a stout young man in khaki dress, with his hands folded, pushed his way through the crowd and came near us. I thought he wanted to touch Bapu's feet ; this happened every day. Wherever Bapu went people approached him to touch his feet and to greet him. We used to tell them in our own way

that Bapu did not like it. To those people who wanted to touch his feet and pick up the dust Bapu would also say, "I am an ordinary human being. Why do you want to pick up the dust of my feet?" Therefore, I pushed aside the intruder and said to him, "Bapu is already ten minutes late; why do you embarrass him?" But he pushed me so forcibly that the rosary, spittoon and note-book dropped from my hands.

So long as the other things dropped, I scuffled with the man; but when the rosary dropped to the ground, I bent down to pick it up. At the same time, three shots were fired, one after another. Darkness prevailed. The atmosphere was charged with smoke and the sky resounded with the boom. Bapu still seemed walking on, chest bare and 'Hei Ra. . . ma ! Hei Ra...' on his lips. His hands were folded, and in a moment he fell to the ground. Some men tried to hold him up. Abhaben also fell down. She at once placed Bapu's head on her lap. I was too puzzled to realize what had happened. The whole incident hardly took 3 or 4 minutes. The smoke was very thick. The sound of bullets had deafened my ears. A crowd of people rushed forth.

What happened to us, the two girls, is beyond description. Streams of blood stained our white clothes all over. It was 17 minutes past 5 by Bapu's watch. With folded hands, Bapu was lying in eternal sleep on the green turf on the lap of Mother Earth, as if he wanted to pardon us for our audacity instead of frowning at it.

It must have taken at least ten minutes to shift him to his room. Unfortunately no doctor was about. On searching Sushilaben's first-aid box we

could not find any special medicine. How often Bapu had said, "My true doctor is Rama !" Perhaps we, the lesser souls, could not devise any means to revive Bapu to serve our own selfish ends, because that would have violated his principle of accepting Rama as his only doctor. Sardar Dada who had hardly reached his house, turned back. We were crying with full-throated voice, but Bapu was feeling no pity on us today ! A time was, when seeing a poor girl like me in sorrow, he would keep on and on at me till he knew the reason of it. But today Bapu can bear everything with equanimity.

The first bullet from the assassin's seven-bore automatic hit the belly $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches to the right of the middle and $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches above the navel. The second hit the belly 1 inch away from the middle and the third 4 inches away to the right. The first and the second bullets passed right through the body. The third was lodged in the flesh and its cap was later found among his clothes. The bullets that passed right through were found on the prayer-ground. Profuse flow of blood turned the face wan in about ten minutes.

Bapu is no more !

Hardening his heart, Bhai Saheb phoned to the hospital over and over again. Thousands of people had collected outside. Making his way through the crowd with great difficulty, Bhai Saheb passed Sardar's house and reached Willingdon Hospital only to come back disappointed. Kanhialal Munshi came in the meantime. Sardar Dada arrived immediately after. Maniben consoled us. She asked me to recite the *Gita*. The presence of Maniben and

her as well as Sardar Dada's affectionate words of consolation revived my spirits a little and I began to recite the *Gita*. Munshiji joined in the recitation as best as he could. Meanwhile Col. Bhargava came and he began to examine Bapu. For two minutes all of us including Sardar Dada were animated by a ray of hopefulness. We expected to hear some encouraging report. But Col. Bhargava knew at once that all life had extinguished. But it is proverbial that a doctor withholds the fateful report as long as he can. To give the frightful news of the passing away of this great man was a more callous business for this doctor than the shooting of the terrible bullets through Bapu's body. He had operated upon me very skilfully. Even this morning we had been talking about him and his nursing home. He whiled away a few minutes in order to delay his report and at last said, "Manu, Bapu is no more !" No sooner did we hear this shocking news, which came as a thunderbolt, than the room where we the children and Bapu used to chat merrily, began to resound with terrible lamentations. Devadas Kaka, Gopu, the two younger children and the little grandson surrounded Bapu's body and began to cry in extreme pain. And Panditji—Ah ! one would not wish even one's enemy to fall upon such evil days—hid his face in Sardar Dada's lap like a little child and began to weep bitter tears of grief. As for us, poor girls, the less said the better.

The last memento

In a short time there was a gathering of lacs of people. This lasted for about an hour. At last, Sardar Dada, being a man of iron as he is, did not

flinch in the least from passing through this most terrible of all ordeals. Of all men he alone consoled everybody. There was no trace of Bapu's glasses and sandals. Before going to prayer on the 30th Bapu himself clipped his nails and gave the clippings to me to be thrown away. But I was engaged in chatting with Rasikbhai and Dhebarbhai and so the clippings still rested on a bit of paper. Today I have put them in my box as if they were priceless gems. (They included one from his thumb, another from one of the bigger fingers and a third from his little finger.) I will preserve them as the last memento of his earthly existence.

Our Bapu !

Then Lord Mountbatten began to comfort everybody. The crowd outside was growing more and more anxious to know about the condition of Bapu ; therefore, Sardar Dada broadcast the news in all its details on the radio. Panditji was speechless. He made one supreme effort to say, "Our Bapu . . ." Then he heaved a deep sigh and uttered, "Bapu is no more with us." At that time it looked as if the bitter cries of the people would shake the earth to its very foundations.

What to do now !

At last it was decided to let the surging crowd have a glimpse of Bapu from the roof of the house and arrangements were set afoot accordingly. At that time I had to go out on some business. Panditji suddenly caught hold of me and, letting himself go, began to say, "Manu ! Manu ! Let us ask Bapu what we are to do now. O Almighty God ! . . . so learned . . . one of the mightiest men of

our country and the world!" I burst into bitter tears by his side. He too wept as woefully. For the time being our spirits harmonized so well that a great man like Panditji was unable to commiserate with a naive girl like me.

Perhaps Bapu may wake up !

Meanwhile, Ambassadors and High Commissioners of different foreign countries began to pour in. I was leading a continuous recitation of the *Gita*. Bhai Saheb and Kaka were moving in and out to make the necessary arrangements. Sushilaben was not with us. Pyarelalji was also busy with the arrangements. Others could not repeat the verses well. Panditji blurted out, "Manu, recite the *Gita* louder ; perhaps Bapu may wake up !" In spite of his deep learning he shut his eyes to reality and would often approach Bapu's body and pass his hand over it, as though he were unaware that Bapu had yielded his last breath.

Victory to Mahatma Gandhi !

There was an endless stream of cameramen. A stage was set up on the roof and Bapu's body was brought out and placed over it. Seeing it, all people, young and old, started shedding tears in continuous streams, as if showers of rain were falling on all sides. The sky reverberated with cries of 'Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai !'¹ As the people paid their homage, their offerings of pice and flowers piled up in a trice. People of different faiths were offering their prayers in perfect harmony.

As Bapu's body was being taken to the bath for

¹ Victory to Mahatma Gandhi !

a wash at 2 o'clock, fortunately Shanti Kumar Bhai arrived. He was present when Ba of blessed memory shuffled off this mortal coil, and today also he is present at the passing away of Bapu. He had all the funeral rites performed according to Hindu customs. A bier was made and the floor was smeared with cow-dung. Without his directions we could not have performed the rites properly, because none of us knew them.

This was an equally critical time. Bapu's body was brought to the bath room. His clothes were removed one by one. Bapu's shawl of Australian wool was pierced through by the bullets and was also scorched at three points. His dhoti and wrap were drenched with blood.

His body was laid on his wooden board. His feet, drenched with blood, proved the truth of the verse, 'Brother, you must foot it alone !' Kaka and all of us were weeping bitterly to see Bapu's body pierced through, but God was not merciful to us. Why should anyone show mercy to us for all our heart-rending shrieks ? When we were all evil-doers, how could we expect God to show mercy ? Who would dare to pour ice-cold water on Bapu's body in that severe winter season ?

When we had washed Bapu's body, his wooden board was put in the middle of the room. A sheet of white *khadi* was spread over it and the body was laid on it.

'Make your toilet !'

Bhai Saheb put a cotton garland and Bapu's rosary, on which he recited Rama's name, round his neck. His throat and chest were painted with

sandal and saffron. A vermilion mark was put on the forehead. Leaves were arranged near the head to read 'Hei Rama' and near the feet to read 'Om'. The whole room was filled with the perfume of roses and other strong-smelling flowers as if the bier were made entirely of flowers. Time passed quickly and the clock struck 3.30. Bapu did not wake me up by the touch of his hand. Today we did not hear his voice calling 'Brij Kishan' to wake up Bhai Saheb. All wanted that the prayer should be said at the regular hour. But today we did not hear Bapu's voice prompting us to begin the prayer with the word *namyo*. Who will ask us to observe two minutes' silence ?

We began the prayer and finished it with great difficulty. Then we sang two hymns : 'Make your toilet' and 'There is no coming back from there.' Shall we never be able to see Bapu's saintly and bright face again ? His loving eyes ? His sympathetic affection ? His hearty smile ? His dauntless chest and his radiant body ? We were chanting the hymns in the *asavary* (literally, optimistic) tune, but despondency was writ on every face,

The crowd was unmanageable, so Bapu's body was taken to the upper storey. Foreign diplomats and Government servants had collected to get a last glimpse of this Angel of Peace in India.

Birla Bhawan, New Delhi

31-1-'48

Day of mourning

Saturday, the 31st of January, dawned. The usual morning rejoicings were nowhere in evidence. The sun had hidden his face among the clouds, as if he were stunned to see the sufferings of the human heart.

Lacs of people had gathered in Delhi and in Birla House to participate in Bapu's pilgrimage to the next world. A day of mourning was being observed throughout the country. The national flag was flying half-mast everywhere in Delhi. Albuquerque Road had to be closed to the public. It was closely guarded by troops. A weapons-carrier was decked out to bear Bapu's body. That vehicle was high enough for all people to see the body. A sheet of saffron-coloured cloth was spread over it and on it was placed the wooden board which Bapu had used in Birla House to his last day. It was planned to put on it the small low cot on which Bapu's body lay. To discuss all these arrangements a long conference was held at the house of General Busher, the Commander-in-Chief.

Exactly at 11 o'clock, Bapu's body was landed on the weapons-carrier together with the wooden board. The body was covered with a milk-white shroud. At this time I was feeling anxious for

father's safety at the railway station. But as soon as we got out of Birla House, somebody informed me that my father had arrived. It occurred to me that Bapu must be feeling anxious about me even in heaven. He must have wished to entrust me back to my father before he himself departed from Birla House ; and perhaps that was why he was delaying his departure.

Offerings of tears

Ramdas Kaka arrived from Nagpur by air. Panditji gave away his most precious rose as his last offering. Poor Sushilaben arrived from Bawalpur, crying and bewailing. We three clasped our hands, bent over Bapu's chest and made offerings of our tears. But Bapu was speechless. I begged Bapu's pardon over and again and prayed to him, "I may not be able to add to the legacy you have entrusted to me, but you will always remind me not to waste it."

In the funeral procession there were detachments of land and air forces and the navy. Guards of armed police in red uniform were also present. Four armoured cars were to lead the procession and to move ahead of the whole crowd. There was no end to the crowd. People were showering flowers on Bapu's body. Pice were piling up like a pyramid. The main entrance to Birla House was closely guarded. People who wanted to pay their homage were admitted by passes. The whole crowd consisting of many lacs of people was plunged in an ocean of grief, their eyes shedding endless tears.

Depart, O Mahatman !

We lifted Bapu's body. I had to bear Bapu's

bier on my shoulder ! Was it my good fortune or bad ? Nobody could have thought that it would fall to my lot to bear on my shoulder this world-adored martyr in his bier. On the one hand, there was tremendous sobbing ; on the other, a running commentary of events was being relayed on the radio in heart-breaking accents : “Bapu’s remains are being taken out now. Millions of people have gathered here. In the gloomy silence, in which even breathing is audible, the Father of the Nation is passing out through the entrance of Birla House to go on his last pilgrimage of peace. Millions of people are assembled here but they are bereft of their soul since it is their soul that is now going on its last journey. Depart, O Mahatman,¹ depart ! Depart on the holy track of your last journey with the homage of millions of hearts. Millions of people are bidding you farewell, O Father of the Nation, O man of all ages ! Depart, Mahatman !”

These words of the announcers were smashing our hearts. We held Panditji’s hand and came down. Panditji’s eyes were so swollen that those who were accustomed to beholding his cheerful face could hardly bear the sight. He was making signs to people to get out of the way. Announcements were being made to the people from a loudspeaker in a car. The representatives of the three wings of the army gave a salute to Bapu before the bier reached the bank of the Yamuna. Maniben said to us, “You will not be able to walk a distance of five miles and so you had better stay at home.” But how could we stay behind ? Sardar Dada, Ramdas

¹ Another form of the word *Mahatma*, a saint.

Kaka, Maulana Sahab, Kripalaniji and others sometimes mounted the weapons-carrier and sometimes walked on foot. Panditji was also doing the same. We started along with the first detachment, singing *Ramdhun*. The police were marching ahead of us. Four armoured cars headed the procession. They were followed by army units, police contingents, Sevadal volunteers and the weapons-carrier bearing the bier.

Following the bier-carrier were Cabinet Ministers, Governor-General Lord Mountbatten, State Governors, Chief Ministers and Cabinet Ministers of States, high military officers, foreign diplomats, friends, relatives, the Birlas, Maharaja Jam Sahab and other princes, members of the AICC and the Lok Sabha and the local leaders.

Four thousand land troops, one thousand airmen and one thousand policemen in their respective uniforms were deployed. Under instructions from the Chinese Ambassador all the Chinese residing in Delhi joined the procession, carrying a flag bearing the inscription, 'May Gandhiji be Immortal !' in Chinese characters. They escorted the bier-carrier.

The cry of 'Do or Die'

The procession started at 11.30 and it crossed a distance of five miles and a half in about five hours, according to the following itinerary. People blew conches. What victory occasioned this conch-blowing ? Was it in honour of Bapu's victory, because he fulfilled, paradoxically enough, both the conditions of his slogan, 'I am determined to do or die' ? The procession was to pass along Albuquerque Road, Kingsway Road, Memorial Porch, Prince's

Park and Shahjehan Road to Delhi Gate, and from there it was to wend its way through Daryaganj and terminate at Rajghat. In about half an hour the procession came to Memorial Porch amidst slogans of 'Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai !' and 'Mahatma Gandhi has become immortal !' When it came near the 150-foot high War Memorial, crowds thronged the route upto the farthest end of Memorial Porch, occupying points of vantage on hundreds of neighbouring trees, telegraph posts and roof-tops as far as the eye could see. The surging mass of humanity consisted of people of all castes and creeds. Thousands of people were eager to rush, with folded hands and tearful eyes, to bow to the Father of the Nation. From time to time Panditji and Devadas Kaka would cause all the girls to ride the bier-carrier in turn. We girls were singing *Ramdhun* and therefore could ride only by turns. In order to keep the route clear a contingent of Gurkha Rifles and scouts were marching ahead. Panditji would often cross the road and rush to either side, which caused the policemen and the volunteers to fear for his safety. It seemed difficult to keep him from harm's way. If somebody ran to him and asked him not to do so, he would say, "Why, you couldn't save Bapu's life, could you ?"

The five-mile route was completely covered with a carpet of rose petals and pice from end to end. Three dakotas of the Indian Air Force circled round thrice above the bier-carrier, showering flowers. At that time the scene of the flying chariot described in the *Ramayana* sprang up before the mind's eye. The dakotas flew past three times. It was really wonder-

ful to see fresh roses with scents being showered each time.

After passing Delhi Gate, the procession made its way through Daryaganj and proceeded to the bank of the Yamuna. It went past the District Jail where Bapu was once kept as a prisoner. At the outer gate of this Jail the watchmen and warders led by the jailor, gave a military salute to the Father of the Nation. At that time Panditji got down from the bier-carrier. Rajendra Babu was in Ceylon. From there he came to Delhi in the afternoon. From Bombay also many visitors came to Delhi in the afternoon. They all joined the procession half-way. Near Delhi Gate the crowd was beyond computation ; it might be 3 or 4 lacs. People from the neighbouring villages had also come.

The last glimpse

A platform measuring $12 \times 12 \times 2\frac{1}{2}$ feet was constructed on the bank of the Yamuna. It was consecrated by water from Mother Yamuna and was decorated with five kinds of leaves and flowers. Fifteen maunds of sandalwood, four maunds of *ghee*, two maunds of incense, one maund of coconuts, one maund of sacrificial wood and seven and a half seers of camphor were kept in readiness. A strong barricade was erected all round the pyre at a distance of 100 yards from it so that people may not crowd too close. Here also several lacs of people had gathered well before the due time. The biting winter wind was lashing against our ears. An immense crowd had assembled before we got there. Many became unconscious, while many others received injuries. Ambulance cars which were kept

in readiness were pressed into service. It was evident that every citizen of India had a right to have a last glimpse of the Father of the Nation. While we were letting down the bier, people showered flowers, smothering the body all over. Only the face painted with sandal and vermilion was visible and bore testimony to Bapu's unique triumph. All of us lent a hand in lowering down the body off the bier-carrier. Panditji was wearing a dhoti according to Hindu custom. Everybody asked Panditji to perform the cremation ceremony, but Panditji insisted on its being performed by Ramdas Kaka. Whenever the bier had to be moved in position, he would invariably call us to lend a hand.

The cremation

At last, with our hands polluted with sin, we bathed Bapu's body with water from the Yamuna, then moved the body so that the head faced north, and landed it on the pile of sandalwood with due ritual and amid chanting of sacred verses. Shastri Ramdhan Sharma was conducting the performance of the ritual. We recited prayers sacred to all religions. There was not one among the crowd whose heart did not melt on this occasion. Gracious God ! Whereas even a pin-prick into Bapu's body sent us into hysterics, we piled logs of wood today on the frail body of the same Bapu. This particular moment hung very heavy on us and taxed our patience to the utmost. I dropped myself on Sardar Dada's lap and cried bitterly. Panditji, too, cried his eyes out. Sardar Dada and Panditji seemed to have aged all of a sudden in the course of a single day. Lord Mountbatten tried to console them as best as he

was able to. Lord and Lady Mountbatten, their two daughters, their son-in-law, Lord Brabourne, Sir Archibald Nye, Governor of Madras, Sarojini Naidu, Governor of Uttar Pradesh, Sir Chandulal Trivedi, Governor of East Punjab, Kher Saheb, President Rajendra Babu, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur and many others also tried to console Panditji, by caressing his back, but he would not stop crying.

At last, the flames rose. The wind was fanning the fire and the sparks began to fly rapidly. As the fury of the wind increased, the sparks flew more rapidly and violently as if to curse us for our sins. Taking pity on our miserable condition, Sardar Dada made us sit in a truck which came in handy and accompanied us to Birla House to leave us there. We dared not step into Bapu's room. There was not a soul in Birla House except us. So we had a good cry, as if the end of the world had come. At last tears dried up in our eyes. In the late hours of the night, when the cold was intense, we bathed in icy water. Since the 30th not even a draught of water had gone down our throats.

A pitiable sight

We were to stay at Rajghat till the end, but, since the crowd was huge and our condition was most deplorable, we were sent back to Birla House. Later, Kaka and Kaki, who loved us most dearly, also came here to inquire after us. Kaka's house was overfull with guests. Devadas Kaka consoled me very affectionately. He asked me to make an inventory of all the belongings of Bapu, and thus he changed the topic. On our request he took us to the cremation ground the same night in his own

car. The place was constantly guarded by Sorabji, Bapu's old comrade in South Africa. A barbed wire fence was put up overnight, and a military guard was also posted there.

We got there at 2 a.m. Bapu's feeble legs—the bones, that is—were burning. Why did we not go blind on seeing this sight? How stony hearted we were ! I was hardly able to stand there. So I drew back and sat in the car. Merciful God ! Spare me this woeful sight again in my life. Still in my teens, I had to witness two such horrible sights ! You made me, O God, witness to the cremation of such immortal personages of the world as revered Kastur Ba and Mahatma Gandhi ! The shock thus sustained will ever live in my heart. Other people may well call me fortunate but it is a poor consolation against this shock.

We have now no engagements. When Bapu was alive, time seemed all too short. But now it is so drawn out that it is quite a riddle to pass it.

In Birla House we still say our prayers in the early hours of the morning as before, near the seat which Bapu occupied. The room looks horribly lonely. Devadas Kaka, Ramdas Kaka and father are still here. Father is staying with them and he likes it. He is very intimate with Kaka. Father also takes great care in scrutinizing and sorting the piles of letters and telegrams bearing uncle's address or ours and sends such of them to newspapers as need publication. He attends to trunk-calls also.

Some of the foreign countries from which messages of condolence have been received are the following : American States, Abyssinia, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Italy, Indonesia, Egypt, Canada, Cuba, Colombia, China, Chile, Germany, Japan, Czechoslovakia, Zanzibar, Greece, Denmark, Turkey, Tibet, South Africa, South Rhodesia, Nepal, the Netherlands, Norway, New Zealand, Palestine, Portugal, Poland, France, the Philippines, Finland, Britain, Burma, Baghdad, Morocco, Uganda, Lebanon, Luxembourg, St. Marino, Sicily, Somaliland, the Sudan, Switzerland, Sweden, Syria, the UNO, the Hawaii Isles. Thus, telegrams and messages of sympathy have been received from all countries of the world ; from their Governments, British dignatories and personal friends and well-wishers of

Bapu. From the messages it is clear that Bapu lived a glorious life and also died a glorious death.

Consignment of bones to holy waters

Balwant Bhai of Bhavnagar took some ashes from me for Bhavnagar. At that time it was not decided whether to send the ashes to every state. The Maharaja Saheb wanted the ashes and, therefore, I gave him some out of my own share. The following scheme was drawn up to consign the ashes to rivers in the main regions of the country : (1) Allahabad : the Triveni Confluence. (2) Bombay : the Godavari at Nasik. (3) Andhra : the Krishna at Bezwada. (4) Tamil Nad : the Cauveri at Srirangam. (5) Bihar : the Gomti near Gaya. (6) Madhya Pradesh : the Narmada near Tripuri. (7) East Punjab : the Sutlej at Jullundur. (8) West Bengal : the Hoogli at Dakshineswar. (9) Indore and Rajasthan : the Kshipra. (10) Orissa : the Mahanadi. (11) Assam : the Brahmaputra. (12) Ahmedabad : the Sabarmati. (13) Wardha : the Pavnar. After this it was decided to consign the ashes also to the sea at Jagannath Puri, Setubandh Rameshwar, Cape Comorin and Porbandar.

On 2nd February a mass prayer was held at Rajghat in which several lacs of people participated. After this all the ashes were stored in a copper urn according to the ritual given in holy books. This brought before our mind's eye all the events of Bapu's life and marked the fall of the curtain ! This is how the human body perishes at last. It was destined that I should see this with my own eyes, unfortunate as I am. Nay, God so destined it that I had also to collect the bones and ashes.

The vase of bones

We brought the vase of bones to Birla House. The whole ceremony was performed by Ramdas Kaka. Devadas Kaka was plunged into extreme grief, yet he cared for all. This copper vase was placed on the same seat where Bapu offered his guidance to suffering people or conversed on other matters always with a smile on his lips. Bapu's portrait was placed against his pillow. This piteous sight beggars description. We say our prayers here every morning. Hundreds of men, women and children come to have a view of the vase. A spinning-wheel is plied without a break and the *Gita* is also recited uninterruptedly. Flowers and pice are piled up in a heap.

Consigning the ashes to holy waters

It was decided to consign the ashes to rivers in all places on 12th February. Today, 10th February, the twelfth-day ceremony was observed at Rajghat amidst the plying of the spinning-wheel, prayers and recital of the *Gita*. From time immemorial Mother Yamuna has been receiving the ashes of numberless sages in her bosom. After returning from there we busied ourselves in making preparations to go to Allahabad tomorrow to immerse the ashes there.

I am writing this part of my diary in the train while going to Allahabad. On 11th February we got ready to say our prayers at 3.30 a.m. as usual. After the prayer, the vase of ashes was placed in a conch-shaped litter. We bore the litter on our shoulders and started for the railway station. We arrived at the station at 4.30 a.m. Panditji, Lord

Mountbatten and some others will reach Allahabad by air before we get there. To carry the ashes a special train with five carriages was requisitioned. The urn was placed in the middle carriage on a table covered with the national flag. It was well decorated with garlands and electric lamps. People could get a good view of it from outside. A non-stop chanting of *Ramdhun* and recital of the *Gita* continued.

Exactly at 6 a.m. Panditji, Lord Mountbatten's staff, foreign ambassadors, many leaders and a huge crowd saw us off. Panditji and others too were shedding tears profusely.

The special train stopped at 10 important stations on its run from Delhi to Allahabad. There vast crowds of people had a last view of the ashes in a spirit of grief and devotion.

On the morning of 12th February we said our prayers collectively as usual. This was the last prayer in the presence of Bapu, that is, his ashes.

Panditji, Sardar Dada, Lord and Lady Mountbatten had arrived at Allahabad yesterday in the afternoon. Sarojini Naidu, Pantji, Rajendra Babu and all the ministers of the central cabinet were present. The necessary arrangements were made by the ministers of Uttar Pradesh. Panditji kept standing all the time to watch over the arrangements. Whenever Bapu came to Allahabad, Panditji ministered to his comforts like a dutiful son. Today the people paid their homage to Bapu. The people of Allahabad must have felt extremely distressed to see Panditji paying his homage, in his capacity as Prime Minister of free India, to the vase of ashes which is all that remains of the Father of the Nation who fell to the bullets of the assassin after bringing freedom to India.

Exactly at 9 the train came to Allahabad station. The confluence of Triveni¹ was five miles away, yet lacs of people lined the route from the station to the confluence. But the whole atmosphere was one of unprecedented calm. All the ministers and foreign ambassadors and diplomats had collected at the station, bearing garlands in their hands.

¹ Three rivers : the Ganga, the Yamuna and the invisible, legendary Saraswati.

The vase of ashes in Kumbh fair

Panditji, Dr Jivaraj Mehta, Rafi Saheb, Sardar Dada and Maulana Saheb took turns at carrying the litter containing the vase of ashes on their shoulders to the 17-foot high Gandhi Chariot and deposited the vase in it. Helicopters were showering flowers from the air on the chariot. From Queen's Road the procession proceeded in regular formation.

At the head of the procession, cars with loud-speakers and four military jeeps were moving abreast. They were followed by a cavalry unit 12 deep and the Kumaun Regiment. Then came a police force and an infantry unit. These were followed by the litter containing the vase of ashes escorted by soldiers 12 deep in front and 3 deep on the flanks. We followed the litter singing *Ramdhun*. Then followed the leaders of the country, state ministers, high government officials and distinguished foreigners 6 deep. Next to them were a military unit and a huge mass of people. Another military unit brought up the rear. The disciplined movement of this procession of 8 to 10 lacs was wonderful. A barricade of four thousand bamboo stakes had been erected so that people might watch the procession from the outside.

All along the route masses of people had taken positions on roof-tops, branches of trees, telegraph poles and on other vantage points. Jet planes showered flowers from time to time. The air resounded with cries of 'Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai!' The Kumbh fair was being held at Allahabad these days. But Bapu's Kumbh¹ produced a deeper impression

¹ The word *Kumbh* means also a vase.

on the people than the Kumbh fair. The ascetics assembled at the fair also bade farewell to this great soul.

An atmosphere of holiness prevailed over the grounds of the Kumbh fair. *Raghupati Raghava* was being sung on the car carrying loudspeakers and the crowd of 10 to 15 lacs was repeating *Ramdhun* with one voice and thus paying its homage to the beloved Father whose last words were '*Hei Rama !*'

Who is to console whom ?

At last the ehariot bearing the vase stopped on the bank of the Yamuna. An amphibious motor duck was kept in readiness. Ramdas Kaka, Devadas Kaka, Sardar Dada, Panditji, Pantji, Padmajaben, Sarojini Devi, Maulana Azad and others deposited the vase in it. From the land, this duck rolled down a specially prepared slope and landed on the Yamuna. We went to the confluence in another barge. Later we were transferred to the duck. Even in that severe cold thousands of people got down into the river to have a glimpse. A crowd of 30 to 40 lacs was watching the scene with bated breath and intense grief. Between the sky overhead and the holy waters at their feet, lacs of people stood with tears in their eyes and the name of their favourite deity on their lips. Non-stop recital from the Vedas and the chants of *Ramdhun* were going on. At the confluence of the Triveni the clear water of the Ganga joins the murky water of the Yamuna while the invisible Saraswati flowing between them joins them at the same point. At that point Ramdas Kaka immersed the vase. He had

placed in our hands grains of the ashes. With great pain and grief we too consigned them to Mother Ganga and Mother Yamuna.

Jawaharlalji and Devadas Kaka burst into bitter tears. Who could console whom ? At that time it seemed as if the Ganga and the Yamuna, the twin sisters, joining together, were shedding tears. Even the sun-god could not bear to see this sight and hid himself behind the clouds. It irked the ear to hear the woeful cries rising from thirty lacs of people. The twelfth chapter of the *Gita* was then recited. Bodily anguish had risen to such a feverish pitch that even bathing in icy water in that cold season could not cool it down.

On our way back we felt extremely lonely. From a high platform Jawaharlalji sobbed out with his choked throat to four or five million people : "This day, alas ! I have consigned my Bapu to the Triveni."

Birla House deserted

Having thus committed Bapu's worldly remains to the eternal womb of the Triveni, we came back to Anand Bhawan.¹ Here Kaki compelled us to eat something. At night we started for Delhi. At Delhi the palatial Birla House looked lonesome and eerie. Every morning and evening all the ministers and thousands of other people attended the prayer at Rajghat.

Devadas Kaka urged us to leave Delhi after observing the death anniversary (22nd February) of Kasturba of blessed memory. But here we felt uneasy and found it hard to beguile the time.

On 22nd February we went to Kasturba Ashram in Mehrauli to offer prayers. There we recited the *Gita*. Sushilaben and I were so moved to tears that we could not join the prayer. We bade farewell to revered Ba in Aga Khan Palace, and within a space of four years to Bapu also. In the evening we went to Rajghat. We are to leave Delhi to-night and so we spent the day in bidding farewell to visitors with a broken heart.

Anonymous letters

Government had reserved for us a third-class carriage from Delhi to Bombay. I had received anonymous letters from Saurashtra, saying that, if I

¹ Pt. Nehru's home at Allahabad.

gave evidence in Gandhiji's murder case and stated the true facts, I should also be shot dead. Therefore, Sardar Dada and Birlaji sent one of their peons to accompany us on the journey. Kanubhai also arrived from Noakhali. We had been waiting for him so that we might all go together.

After returning from Rajghat we loaded our luggage on a truck and sent it to the railway station. We started later. Lakshmi Kaki gave me leave to go with a very heavy heart. She gave me a *sari* and burst into tears. Abha Bhabhi gave me a jar of vermilion. People came to see us off at the station. Dr Sushilaben, Devadas Kaka, Gopu and Tara could not hold back their tears. Newspaper correspondents were also present.

The train was late by two hours. Devadas Kaka took me aside and talked to me till the departure of the train. His particular topic of conversation was my diary. After that he talked about his strained relations with . . . in the present political set-up and also about the other friends of Bapu. Kaka warned me not to disclose the contents of my diary to anyone and at the same time forbade me to divulge the contents of important letters. He learnt from me Bapu's views about . . . 's bribe-taking. While pacing up and down the platform, he gave me some good counsel with great affection on the eve of my departure, and said, "You are very young but you possess a lot of valuable literature. And you are also unsophisticated. But, since your brother is with you, I have no fear." He urged me to come to Delhi again and to write to him about my own affairs from time to time.

The train whistled and all of us burst into tears again. After bidding farewell to Bapu I am going home today. I had never dreamt that I should go back to Mahua in such misery. Only four persons were travelling with me : father, Manubhai, Abha Bhabhi and the peon.

We passed the whole day in train and arrived at Bombay on the 24th. There we remained till 1st March as guests of Shanti Kumar. On the 1st he booked our passage to Bhavnagar by air and we arrived at Bhavnagar.

Departure from Bhavnagar

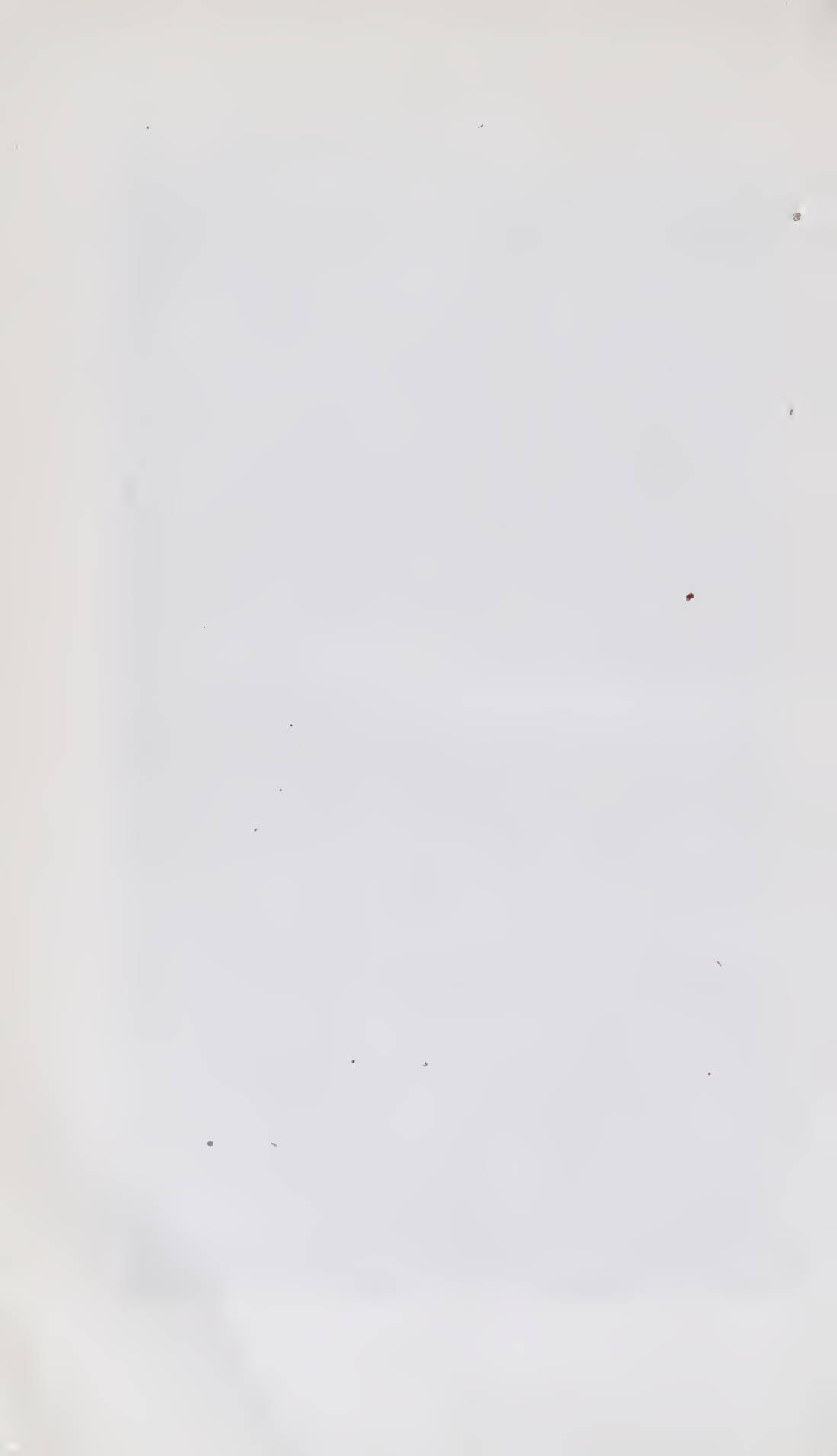
We had intended to stay at Bhavnagar for only one day but it took us five days. The Maharaja and the Maharani welcomed me like their own daughter. At a word from Bapu this couple had placed their state at his disposal to be converted into a responsible Government. This was a direct result of Bapu's greatness and his all-pervading influence. During our five days' stay at Bhavnagar functions were held in many places. The editor of *Bhavnagar Samachar* came to see us on 6th March. He urged me to write out my recollections of Bapu for publication. I said, "I cannot possibly do it." The difficulty is what topics to select from Bapu's many-sided life. Surti Saheb also made the same request to me. We started from Bhavnagar on 6th March at 10 a.m. and came to Mahua at 5-30 p.m.

Let us bow to Time !

With what hopes I had gone from Mahua to Noakhali in order to participate in that great sacrifice ! Bapu had written to me, "Come with a determination to do or die." But Bapu was not made

of the common clay of which we are all made. He was a father and a mother to me ; how could he let his own child die ? He gave up his own life in the great sacrifice he started at Noakhali, and fulfilled his own saying. Only after that he allowed me to come back to Mahua. After coming here I realized for the first time that it was no longer possible for me to meet Bapu in this world. Over a year ago, in September of 1946, I went from this same Mahua to Calcutta and came back here in the first week of March, 1948, after witnessing the martyrdom of a prophet who was adored by the whole world.

Let us bow to Time !



A few Rare and Important Letters

Agakhan Palace, Poona
Dated 27.2.'44

Dear Manudi,

Have you slept well? I wrote a long letter yesterday to retain you and Prabhavati (Jai Prakash Narain's wife), but surging thoughts would not let me sleep. At last I saw light. It is improper to make such a request. It is not in conformity with the spirit of jail life. We ought to bear far greater separation. You are sensible enough. Forget your grief as you have to do far greater things. Give up this weeping and cheer up. Learn whatever you can after you are out of prison. After all this service rendered by you, your well-being is assured under any circumstances. I am really worried about you. You are just like your old self—so innocent, simple and serviceable. Service has become a part of you. But still you have much to learn. You are somewhat silly also. If you remain uneducated, you would regret it and so would I if I continued to live. You know how I would feel without you. But I do not like to keep you any longer here as it would be infatuation. I am certain that the proper course for you is to go to Rajkot. You would there get the ennobling guidance of Naraindas. There you would probably learn the art of working and, certainly, music, and whatever else you can pick up. If you stay there at least for a year, you would have a balanced attitude. Then you can go to Karachi or anywhere else. (I was at Karachi with my father, studying in the fifth standard before I went to Bapuji.) Gurudayal Mallick is indeed there but he will not stay there for a long time. So there you would get only academic education. That too is useful. All this is there, but what you can gain at Rajkot, you can gain nowhere else. More when I break my silence, and don't forget that I am your mother. If you grasp so much it is more than enough.

Preserve this letter.

Blessings from Bapu.

Mahabaleshwar
3.6.'45

Dear Manudi,

You have again fallen ill ! Beware betimes ! If you have patience, you will make an efficient nurse. Don't go away as soon as you are free from fever. Sushila is of the opinion that you should stay in Dinsha's nursing home. I am grieved to know that you suffer from fever so frequently. If you learn to take care of your health and become as strong as steel, the rest will follow. Haste makes waste. Come here if you like. Give up the idea of going to Nagpur.

Blessings from Bapu.

My health worsened day by day. When Bapuji knew of it, his peremptory note was delivered to me like a telegram.

Mahabaleshwar
4.6.'45

Dear Manudi,

I have never met another silly girl like you. You must come here in response to this letter. Bable (Mahadev's son) must accompany you so that you may not have to put up with any discomfort on the way.

Blessings from Bapu.

Before I was able to start, we heard on the air that all the members of the Congress Working Committee had been released from prison and they and Bapuji were meeting in Bombay. After Bapuji had arrived at Birla house, a car came to fetch me. We two sisters went to Bapuji. When I got there and Bapuji saw my shattered condition, he had a bed made for me and made me lie down on it without saying a word to me.

Next day I went home, and Bapuji went to Simla on the 12th.

I was put under the care of Dr Dinsha in his nursing home at Poona. I was feeling very uneasy and so I fell in with this new proposal.

I came to Poona. Meanwhile there was a new development. Father earmarked a sum of money for me and wanted to create a trust for it. I learned about it much later, but correspondence on this subject had been going on between him and Bapuji for some time. I could not have imagined that Bapuji would act as a trustee for me. I was surprised to know that he willingly accepted the trusteeship of a paltry sum of money on behalf of a girl like me while he held in trust not only the properties of his mother, father and grandfather but public money to the tune of many laes. Everything is, however, possible through infinite love and ties in a previous birth. The truth of this aphorism came home to me when I read the following letters :

Manor Villa, Simla
25.6.'45

Dear Jayasukhlal,

Enclosed is a trust deed drafted by me. It is in Gujrati because that is the language current in that region. If a Gujrati deed may not be registered there, get it rendered in Sindhi or Hindustani. It need not be in English. You can make alterations in the conditions. I have tried to put your ideas as best as I could.

I shall continue to be anxious till Manu regains her health. She will have moved to Dinsha's nursing home by this time. Let us hope she will get well there. I do not want to stay here long. How long that will be is going to be decided today.

Blessings from Bapu.

An English rendering of the original draft drawn up by Bapuji is given below :

1. I, Jayasukhlal Amritlal Gandhi, original resident of Porbandur and at present residing at Karachi, do hereby execute this deed of which the terms are as follows :

2. I am not indebted to anybody and my property is free from all encumbrances till the date of the execution of this deed.

3. My fourth daughter, Kumari Manu (hereinafter called Manuben) is engaged in social service to the best of her ability and has been acquiring the requisite skill for the last few years under the control and guidance of my elder kinsman, Shri Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (hereinafter called Gandhiji). I am building great hopes on her training as a social worker. I have pledged a sum of Rupees Ten Thousand in her name for her maintenance so that none else may have to share the burden thereof. Under this deed I have deposited the aforesaid amount with.....at.....per cent per annum and the receipt thereof is attached herewith. As the trustee of that amount Gandhiji will have the right to spend the money on Manuben as he deems fit and proper. If the amount realized as interest falls short of the requirements, he can demand the extra money from me. If I fail to pay up the amount demanded, Gandhiji or his nominee will have the right to draw on the capital.

If Gandhiji predeceases me or is unable to discharge his duties as trustee for any reason, the trusteeship will devolve on me *ipso facto* and the rights vested in Gandhiji through this instrument of trusteeship will revert to me.

In the event of my death or incapacitation the rights vested in me will be exercised by a person

nominated by the trustees of the Sevagram Ashram.

When Manuben, after finishing her education, takes to social work and she is not required to undergo further training, she will be competent to utilise the pledged amount as she pleases, provided she attains the age of 35 years and neither Gandhiji nor I survive ; and the trustee nominated by the trustees of the Sevagram Ashram will be in duty bound to entrust the capital sum with interest to Manuben if she so desires. In case Manuben marries, the residuary amount will be distributed among the four sisters in equal shares.

Dear Jayasukhlal,

If you desire to make any alterations in this draft or want to substitute one of the names given therein for your own name, you may do so. I would like that the other names should be placed in order of precedence after my and your names.

Blessings from Bapu.

Bapuji got me admitted to Dinsha's nursing home. But there I was kept on liquid diet. Nature-cure experts say that this diet reacts upon the human body, and the disease is radically cured ultimately. The reaction set in on me and I started suffering from a new disease, namely, asthma. I was at sea. The doctors, of course, sent weekly reports about me to Bapuji. With reference to these reports Bapuji wrote to me :

Sevagram
20.7.'45

Dear Manudi,

You are undergoing a severe trial. I have complete confidence in Dr Dinsha. Therefore, I do not worry about you. You are getting the best possible treatment. I can gather from your

letter that you two sisters will learn something useful there. Come out with copper-coloured bodies. Follow the instructions of the doctor without a hitch. If you fight shy of the treatment, I shall have very anxious time.

Blessings from Bapu.

Mussoorie
6.6.'46

Dear Manudi,

From the narration you have given of your exploits I surmise that you are making good use of your time. By hooligans you mean the wicked boys of whom you had an experience. The way you acted will be regarded as Draupadi's way to a certain extent. But it is Sita's way that is worth translating into life. No doubt, both are regarded as Satis or chaste women. One might well speculate how Draupadi who had five husbands remained chaste and was regarded as such. But I leave it at that. Even though you did no more than give a fitting reply to the hooligans, your reply too will be regarded as an act of hooliganism if your heart was filled with anger. The very thought that you can cow down a hooligan by taking off your sandal and flinging it at him or hitting him with it prevents you from judging your own action. The demonstration of physical strength you give in a public place may well fill people with courage and frighten away the hooligans, who are by nature cowards. But if you aimed your sandal at the hooligan out of pity for him, I should consider it an act of non-violence, even though you flung it at him. Non-violence has its roots in the heart. And its effect is that the opponent, astonished at the pity underlying the blows, succumbs to soul force and not to the blows as such. I give you an instance from my own life. Miss Shleshin was once smoking a *bidi* in my presence. I gave her a slap. She threw away the *bidi* and, for the first time, burst into tears then and there. She asked for my pardon and wrote to me that she would not repeat the offence and that she had come to know what love I bore her. There are many similar instances in my life. Such instances may be found in the lives of others unknown to us. Could those hooligans know that your action was motivated by the same love? Do not be deluded by the commendation of the people. Search your own heart and find out whether your action was

prompted by violence or non-violence. Generally speaking, aiming a sandal is not a sign of culture or non-violence; it is a sign of ignorance or bad manners. But your action can be construed as an instance of non-violence, which you alone or your God can determine. After analysing your action minutely, I would congratulate you, for I do not mind if your action involved violence. It should be satisfaction enough for you that you did not yield. I take it that you are inclined towards non-violence. Therefore, granting that your action was violent, you can meditate over it and learn to be non-violent. Hence, I fondly asked all people to peruse your letter. Akha Bhagat says, "However humble your life, you should abide in God." You will be considered better trained if you can learn to be righteous, truthful and non-violent and can practise these virtues while staying there, than you would be if you learnt these virtues with me or under my tutelage.

Bapu's blessings to you both.

The same day on which he was given a beating the boy came up to my house at 11.30 p.m. and threw himself at my feet, saying that he had committed a shameful act and assuring me that he would never resort to teasing girls in future. Subsequently I received Bapuji's letter, but I wanted a little more clarification. Bapuji wrote back to me :

Delhi
26.6.'46

Dear Manudi,

I received your letter of the 15th about three days back, but I could not reply to it till today. Referring to your courageous action, you have asked me whether I would call it violent or non-violent. But for you it is better not to think over this matter.

By brooding over non-violence we are apt to commit violence when the occasion calls. You should not mind in what light people take your action. The effect of our actions does not depend on what people think of it but on the workings of our own mind. We cannot know our own mind. But suppose we

can know it. Then, if somebody's conscience says that to utter a swear word or to deal a blow is a violent act, it will remain as such to him. Whether his action is really non-violent or not, God alone can know. From the effect his action produces on the opponent the man himself and the onlookers can decide its nature. But why should I tangle you in this labyrinth? If you assiduously try to cultivate this virtue, it will be a valuable part of your training.

Bapu's blessings to both of you.

